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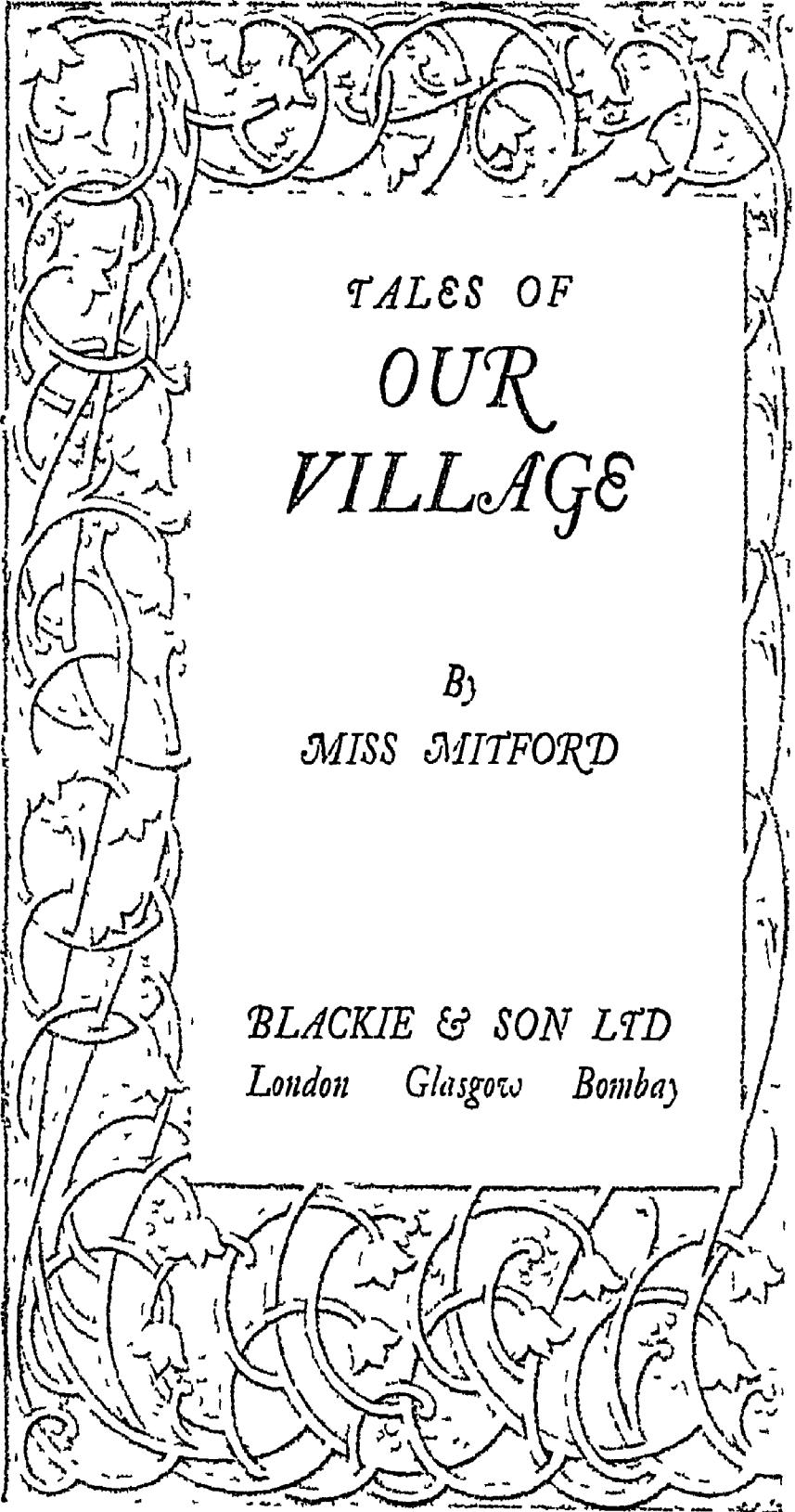
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LITTLE HARRY IS LIVING WITH OUR GOOD MOLE-CATCHER

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TALES OF  
OUR  
VILLAGE

By  
MISS MITFORD

BLACKIE & SON LTD  
London Glasgow Bombay



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# TALES OF OUR VILLAGE

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## THE STREET

Of all situations for a constant residence, that which appears to me most delightful is a little village far in the country; a small neighbourhood, not of fine mansions finely peopled, but of cottages and cottage-like houses, with inhabitants whose faces are as familiar to us as the flowers in our garden—a little world of our own, where we know everyone, are known to everyone, interested in everyone, and have reason to hope that everyone feels an interest in us.

How pleasant it is to slide into these true-hearted feelings from the kindly and unconscious influence of habit, and to learn to know and to love the people about us, with all their peculiarities, just as we learn to know and to love the nooks and turns of the shady

lanes and sunny commons that we pass every day.

Such is this Berkshire hamlet in which I write—a long, straggling, winding street at the bottom of a fine eminence. Will you walk with me through our village, courteous reader? The journey is not long. We will begin at the lower end, and proceed up the hill.

" The tidy, square, red cottage on the right hand, with the long well-stocked garden by the side of the road, belongs to a retired publican from a neighbouring town; a substantial person with a comely wife; one who prides himself on independence and idleness, talks politics, reads newspapers, and cries out for reform. It must not be concealed that, in spite of gardening, of newspaper reading, of jaunting about in his little cart, and frequenting both church and chapel, our worthy neighbour begins to feel the weariness of idleness.

He hangs over his gate, and tries to entice passengers to stop and chat; he volunteers little jobs all round, smokes cherry trees to cure the blight, and traces and blows up all

the wasp nests in the parish. I have seen a great many wasps in our garden to-day, and shall enchant him with the intelligence. He even assists his wife in her sweepings and dustings. Poor man! he is a very respectable person, and would be a very happy one, if he would add a little employment to his dignity. It would be the salt of life to him.

Next to his house, though parted from it by another long garden with a yew arbour at the end, is the pretty dwelling of the shoemaker, a pale, sickly-looking, black-haired man, the very model of sober industry. There he sits in his little shop from early morning till late at night. An earthquake would hardly stir him.

Our shoemaker is a man of substance; he employs three journeymen, two lame and one a dwarf, so that his shop looks like an hospital; he has purchased the lease of his dwelling, some even say that he has bought it out-and-out. He has only one pretty daughter, a light, delicate, fair-haired girl of fourteen, the champion, protectress, and playfellow of every child under three years old, whom she jumps, dances,

dandles, and feeds all day long. A very attractive person is that child-loving girl. I have never seen any in her station who possessed so thoroughly that undefinable charm, the lady-look. See her on a Sunday in her white frock, and she might pass for an earl's daughter. She likes flowers too, and has a great number of white stocks under her window, as pure and delicate as herself.

The first house on the opposite side of the way is the blacksmith's; a gloomy dwelling, where the sun never seems to shine; dark and smoky within and without, like a forge. The blacksmith is a high officer in our little state, nothing less than a constable; but, alas! alas! when tumults arise, and the constable is called for, he will commonly be found in the thickest of the fray.

Next to this official dwelling is a spruce: brick building, red, high, and narrow, boasting, one above another, three sash windows, the only sash windows in the village, with a clematis on one side and a rose on the other, tall and narrow like itself. It belongs to a plump, merry, bustling dame, with four fat, <sup>a</sup>rosy, noisy children.

Then comes the village shop, like other village shops a repository for bread, shoes, tea, cheese, tape, ribbons, and bacon—for everything, in short, except the one particular thing which you happen to want at the moment, and will be sure not to find.

The people are civil and thriving, and frugal withal; they have let the upper part of their house to two young women (one of them is a pretty blue-eyed girl) who teach little children their A B C, and make caps and gowns for their mammas. I believe they find adorning the body a more profitable vocation than adorning the mind.

Divided from the shop by a narrow yard, and opposite the shoemaker's, is a habitation of whose inmates I shall say nothing. A cottage—no—a miniature house, with many additions, little odds and ends of places, pantries, and what not; all angles, and of a charming in-and-outness; a little bricked court before one half, and a little flower yard before the other.

The walls, old and weather-stained, covered with hollyhocks, roses, honeysuckles, and a great apricot tree; the casements full of

geraniums (ah, there is our superb white cat peeping out from amongst them); and the closets (our landlord has the assurance to call them rooms) full of contrivances and corner-cupboards.

The little garden behind is full of common flowers, tulips, pinks, larkspurs, peonies, stocks, and carnations, with an arbour of privet, not unlike a sentry box, where one lives in a delicious green light, and looks out on the gayest of all gay flower beds. That house was built on purpose to show in what an exceeding small compass comfort may be packed. Well, I will loiter there no longer.

The next house is a place of importance, the Rose Inn; a whitewashed building, retired from the road behind its fine swinging sign, with a little bow-window room coming out on one side, and forming, with our stable on the other, a sort of open square, which is the constant resort of carts, wagons, and chaises. Our landlord is a thriving man and portly. He has a stirring wife, a hopeful son, and a daughter, the belle of the village.

Next door lives a carpenter, "famed ten miles round, and worthy all his fame",—few

cabinetmakers surpass him—with his excellent wife, and their little daughter Lizzy, the playing and queen of the village, a child three years old according to the register, but six in size and strength and intellect, in power and in self-will.

She manages everybody in the place, her schoolmistress included; turns the wheelwright's children out of their own little cart, and makes them draw her; entices cakes and lollipops from the very shop window; makes the lazy carry her, the silent talk to her, the grave romp with her; does anything she pleases; is absolutely irresistible.

Her chief attraction lies in her exceeding power of loving, and her firm reliance on the love and indulgence of others. How impossible it would be to disappoint the dear little girl when she runs to meet you, slides her pretty hand into yours, looks up gladly in your face, and says, “Come!” You must go: you cannot help it.

Another part of her charm is her singular beauty. Together with a good deal of the character of Napoleon, she has something of his square, sturdy, upright form, with the

finest limbs in the world, a complexion purely English, a round, laughing face, sunburnt and rosy, large merry blue eyes, curling brown hair, and a wonderful play of countenance.

Yes, Lizzy is queen of the village! She has but one rival in her dominions, a certain white greyhound called Mayflower, much her friend, who resembles her in beauty and strength, in playfulness, and almost in sagacity, and reigns over the animal world as she over the human. They are both coming with me, Lizzy and Lizzy's "pretty May".

We are now at the end of the street; a cross-lane, a rope-walk shaded with limes and oaks, and a cool, clear pond overhung with elms, lead us to the bottom of the hill.

There is still one house round the corner, ending in a picturesque wheeler's shop. The dwelling house is more ambitious. Look at the fine flowered window blinds, the green door with the brass knocker, and the somewhat prim but very civil person who is sending off a labouring man with sirs and curtsies enough for a prince of the blood.

Those are the curate's lodgings—apartments his landlady would call them: he lives with his

own family four miles off, but once or twice a week he comes to his neat little parlour to write sermons, to marry, or to bury, as the case may require.

Never were better or kinder people than his host and hostess: and there is a reflection of clerical importance about them since their connection with the Church which is quite edifying—a decorum, a gravity, a solemn politeness. Oh, to see the worthy wheeler carry the gown after his lodger on a Sunday, nicely pinned up in his wife's best handkerchief!—or to hear him rebuke a squalling child or a squabbling woman! The curate is nothing to him. He is fit to be perpetual churchwarden.

We must now cross the lane into the shady rope-walk. That pretty white cottage opposite, which stands straggling at the end of the village in a garden full of flowers, belongs to our mason, the shortest of men, and his handsome tall wife: he, a dwarf, with the voice of a giant; one starts when he begins to talk as if he were shouting through a speaking trumpet; she, the sister, daughter, and granddaughter of a long line of gardeners, and no unskilled one herself. Her plants are

sure to live; mine have a sad trick of dying, perhaps because I love them, "not wisely, but too well", and kill them with overkindness.

Halfway up the hill is another detached cottage, the residence of an officer and his beautiful family. That eldest boy, who is hanging over the gate, and looking with such intense childish admiration at my Lizzy, might be a model for a Cupid.

## THE COMMON

How pleasantly the road winds up the hill, with its broad green borders and hedgerows so thickly timbered! How finely the evening sun falls on that sandy excavated bank, and touches the farmhouse on the top of the eminence! and how clearly defined and relieved is the figure of the man who is just coming down!

It is poor John Evans, the gardener—an excellent gardener till about ten years ago, when he lost his wife, and became insane. He was sent to St. Luke's, and dismissed as cured; but his power was gone and his strength; he could no longer manage a garden, or submit to the restraint, or encounter the fatigue of regular employment: so he retreated to the workhouse, the pensioner and factotum of the village, amongst whom he divides his services. His mind often wanders, intent on some fantastic and impractic-

able plan, and lost to present objects; but he is perfectly harmless, and full of a child-like simplicity, a smiling contentedness, a most touching gratitude.

Everyone is kind to John Evans, for there is that about him which must be loved; and his unprotectedness, his utter defencelessness, have an irresistible claim on every better feeling.

He is the happiest of men just now, for he has the management of a melon bed—a melon bed!—fie! What a grand, pompous name was that for three melon plants under a hand-light. John Evans is sure that they will succeed. We shall see: as the chancellor said, “I doubt”.

We are now on the very brow of the eminence, close to the Hill House and its beautiful garden. On the outer edge of the paling, hanging over the bank that skirts the road, is an old thorn—such a thorn! The long sprays covered with snow blossoms, so graceful, so elegant, so lightsome, and yet so rich!

What a pretty picture! The road winding down the hill with a slight bend, like that in



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HOW MY UNCLE DID KISS HIM!

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the High Street at Oxford; a wagon slowly ascending, and a horseman passing it at full trot. Halfway down, just at the turn, the red cottage of the lieutenant, covered with vines, the very image of comfort and content; farther down on the opposite side, the small white dwelling of the little mason; then the limes and the rope-walk; then the village street peeping through the trees, whose clustering tops hide all but the chimneys, and various roofs of the houses, and here and there some angle of a wall.

Farther on, the elegant town of B——, with its fine old church towers and spires; the whole view shut in by a range of chalky hills, and over every part of the picture, trees so profusely scattered, that it appears like a woodland scene, with glades and villages intermixed.

The trees are of all kinds and all hues, chiefly the finely-shaped elm, of so bright and deep a green, the tips of whose high outer branches drop down with such a crisp and garland-like richness, and the oak, whose stately form is just now so splendidly adorned by the sunny colouring of the young leaves.

Turning again up the hill, we find ourselves  
(c 264)

on that peculiar charm of English scenery, a green common, divided by the road; the right side fringed by hedgerows and trees, with cottages and farmhouses irregularly placed, and terminated by a double avenue of noble oaks.

The left, prettier still, dappled by bright pools of water, and islands of cottages and cottage gardens, and sinking gradually down to cornfields and meadows, and an old farmhouse with pointed roofs and clustered chimneys, looking out from its blooming orchard, and backed by woody hills.

"The common overgrown with fern, and rough  
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deform'd  
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,  
And decks itself with ornaments of gold."

—*Cowper.*

The common is itself the prettiest part of the prospect; half covered with low furze, whose golden blossoms reflect so intensely the last beams of the setting sun, and alive with cows and sheep, and two sets of cricketers; some standing, some sitting, some stretched on the grass, all taking a delighted

interest in the game; the other, a merry group of little boys, at a humble distance, for whom even cricket is scarcely lively enough, shouting, leaping, and enjoying themselves to their hearts' content.

## THE SHAW

The Shaw leading to Hannah Bint's habitation is a very pretty mixture of wood and coppice; that is to say, a tract of thirty or forty acres covered with fine growing timber—ash, and oak, and elm very regularly planted—and interspersed here and there with large patches of underwood, hazel, maple, birch, holly, and hawthorn, woven into almost impenetrable thickets by long wreaths of the bramble, the briony, and the brier rose, or by the pliant and twisting garlands of the wild honeysuckle.

In other parts, the Shaw is quite clear of its bosky undergrowth, and clothed only with large beds of feathery fern, or carpets of flowers, primroses, orchises, cowslips, ground ivy, crane's bill, cotton-grass, Solomon's seal, and forget-me-not, crowded together with a profusion and brilliancy of colour, such as I have rarely seen equalled even in a garden.

Here the wild hyacinth really enamels the ground with its fresh and lovely purple; there,

"On aged roots, with bright green mosses clad,  
Dwells the wood-sorrel, with its bright thin leaves  
Heart-shaped and triply folded, and its root  
Creeping like beaded coral; whilst around  
Flourish the copse's pride, anemones,  
With rays like golden studs on ivory laid  
Most delicate, but touch'd with purple clouds,  
Fit crown for April's fair but changeful brow".

The variety is much greater than I have enumerated; for the ground is so unequal, now swelling in gentle ascents, now dimpling into dells and hollows, and the soil so different in different parts, that the sylvan flora is unusually extensive and complete.

The season is, however, now too late for this floweriness; and except the tufted wood-bines, which have continued in bloom during the whole of this lovely autumn, and some lingering garlands of the purple wild vetch, wreathing round the thickets, and uniting with the ruddy leaves of the bramble, and the pale festoons of the briony, there is little to call one's attention from the grander beauties of the trees.

The sycamore, its broad leaves already spotted—the oak, heavy with acorns—and the delicate shining rind of the weeping birch, “the lady of the woods”, thrown out in strong relief from a background of holly and hawthorn, each studded with coral berries, and backed with old beeches, beginning to assume the rich, tawny hue which makes them, perhaps, the most picturesque of autumnal trees, as the transparent freshness of their young foliage is undoubtedly the choicest ornament of the forest in spring.

A sudden turn round one of these magnificent beeches brings us to the boundary of the Shaw, and leaning upon a rude gate, we look over an open space of about ten acres of ground, still more varied and broken than that which we have passed, and surrounded on all sides by thick woodland.

As a piece of colour, nothing can well be finer. The ruddy glow of the heath-flower, contrasting, on the one hand, with the golden-blossomed furze, on the other, with a patch of buckwheat, of which the bloom is not past, although the grain be ripening—the beautiful buckwheat, whose transparent leaves and stalks

are so brightly tinged with vermillion, while the delicate pink-white of the flower, a paler persicaria, has a feathery fall, at once so rich and so graceful, and a fresh and reviving odour, like that of birch trees in the dew of a May evening. \*

The bank that surmounts this attempt at cultivation is crowned with the late foxglove and the stately mullein; the pasture, of which so great a part of the waste consists, looks as green as an emerald; a clear pond, with the bright sky reflected in it, lets light into the picture. The white cottage of the keeper peeps from the opposite coppice; and the vine-covered dwelling of Hannah Bint rises from amidst the pretty garden, which lies bathed in the sunshine around it.

The living and moving surroundings are all in keeping with the cheerfulness and repose of the landscape. Hannah's cow grazing quietly beside the keeper's pony; a brace of fat pointer puppies holding amicable intercourse with a litter of young pigs; ducks, geese, cocks, hens, and chickens scattered over the turf; Hannah herself sallying forth from the cottage door, with her milk-bucket

in her hand, and her little brother following with the milking stool.

My friend, Hannah Bint, is by no means an ordinary person. Her father, Jack Bint (for in all his life he never arrived at the dignity of being called John, indeed in our parts he was commonly known by the cognomen of London Jack), was a drover of high repute in his profession.

No man, between Salisbury Plain and Smithfield, was thought to conduct a flock of sheep so skilfully through all the difficulties of lanes and commons, streets and highroads, as Jack Bint, aided by Jack Bint's famous dog, Watch; for Watch's rough, honest face, black, with a little white about the muzzle, and one white ear, was as well known at fairs and markets as his master's equally honest and weather-beaten visage.

Lucky was the dealer that could secure their services; Watch being renowned for keeping a flock together better than any shepherd's dog on the road—Jack, for delivering them more punctually, and in better condition. No man had a more thorough knowledge of the proper night stations, where good feed might be pro-

cured for his charge, and good liquor for Watch and himself; Watch, like other sheep dogs, being accustomed to live chiefly on bread and beer.

His master, though not averse to a pot of good double X, preferred gin; and they who plod slowly along, through wet and weary ways, in frost and in fog, have undoubtedly a stronger temptation to indulge in that stimulus than we water drinkers, sitting in warm and comfortable rooms, can readily imagine. For certain, our drover could never resist the gentle seduction of the gin bottle, and, being of a free, merry, jovial temperament, one of those persons commonly called good fellows, who like to see others happy in the same way as themselves, he was apt to circulate it at his own expense, to the great improvement of his popularity, and the great detriment of his finances.

## ' HANNAH ' BINT

All this did vastly well whilst Jack's earnings continued proportionate to his spendings, and the little family at home were comfortably supported by his industry: but when a rheumatic fever came on, one hard winter, and finally settled in his limbs, reducing the most active and hardy man in the parish to the state of a confirmed cripple, then his reckless improvidence stared him in the face; and poor Jack, a thoughtless but kind creature, and a most affectionate father, looked at his three motherless children with the acute misery of a parent who has brought those whom he loves best in the world to abject destitution. He found help where he probably least expected it, in the sense and spirit of his young daughter, a girl of twelve years old.

Hannah Bint was the eldest of the family, and had, ever since her mother's death, which event had occurred two or three years before, been

accustomed to take the direction of their domestic concerns, to manage her two brothers, to feed the pigs and the poultry, and to keep house during the almost constant absence of her father. She was a quick, clever lass, of a high spirit, a firm temper, some pride, and a horror of accepting parochial relief, which is every day becoming rarer amongst the peasantry; but which forms the surest safeguard to the sturdy independence of the English character.

Our little damsel possessed this quality in perfection; and when her father talked of giving up their comfortable cottage, and removing to the workhouse, whilst she and her brothers must go to service, Hannah formed a bold resolution, and, without disturbing the sick man by any participation of her hopes and fears, proceeded, after settling their trifling affairs, to act at once on her own plans and designs.

Careless of the future as the poor drover had seemed, he had yet kept clear of debt, and by subscribing constantly to a benefit club, had secured a pittance that might at least assist in supporting him during the long years of

sickness and helplessness to which he was doomed to look forward. This his daughter knew.

She knew, also, that the employer in whose service his health had suffered so severely was a rich and liberal cattle-dealer in the neighbourhood, who would willingly aid an old and faithful servant, and had, indeed, come forward with offers of money. To assistance from such a quarter Hannah saw no objection. Farmer Oakley and the parish were quite distinct things.

Of him, accordingly, she asked, not money, but something much more in his own way—"a cow! any cow! old or lame, or what not, so that it were a cow! she would be bound to keep it well; if she did not, he might take it back again.

"She even hoped to pay for it by and by, by instalments, but that she would not promise!" And partly amused, partly interested by the child's earnestness, the wealthy yeoman gave her, not as a purchase, but as a present, a very fine young Alderney. She then went to the lord of the manor, and, with equal knowledge of character, begged his permission to keep her

cow on the Shaw common. “ Farmer Oakley had given her a fine Alderney, and she would be bound to pay the rent, and keep her father off the parish, if he would only let it graze on the waste.”

He, too, half from real good nature, half not to be outdone in liberality by his tenant, not only granted the requested permission, but reduced the rent so much, that the produce of the kine seldom fails to satisfy their kind landlord.

Now, Hannah showed great judgment in setting up as a dairywoman. She could not have chosen an occupation more completely unoccupied, or more loudly called for. One of the most provoking of the petty difficulties which beset people with a small establishment in this neighbourhood, is the trouble, almost the impossibility, of procuring the pastoral luxuries of milk, eggs, and butter, which rank, unfortunately, amongst the indispensable necessities of housekeeping.

To your thoroughbred Londoner, who, whilst grumbling over his own breakfast, is apt to fancy that thick cream, and fresh butter, and new-laid eggs, grow, so to say, in the country—

form an actual part of its natural produce—it may be some comfort to learn, that in this great grazing district, however the calves and the farmers may be the better for cows, nobody else is; that farmers' wives have ceased to keep poultry; and that we unlucky villagers sit down often to our first meal in a state of destitution, which may well make him content with his thin milk and his Cambridge butter, when compared to our imputed pastoralities.

Hannah's Alderney restored us to one rural privilege. Never was so cleanly a little milk-maid. She changed away some of the cottage finery, which, in his prosperous days, poor Jack had pleased himself with bringing home—the China tea service, the gilded mugs, and the painted waiters—for the useful utensils of the dairy, and speedily established a regular and gainful trade in milk, eggs, butter, honey, and poultry—for poultry they had always kept.

Her domestic management prospered equally. Her father, who retained the perfect use of his hands, began a manufacture of mats and baskets, which he constructed with great nicety and adroitness.

The eldest boy, a sharp and clever lad, cut for him his rushes and osiers; erected, under his sister's direction, a shed for the cow, and enlarged and cultivated the garden (always with the good leave of her kind patron, the lord of the manor), until it became so ample, that the produce not only kept the pig, and half-kept the family, but afforded another branch of merchandise to the indefatigable directress of the establishment.

For the younger boy, less quick and active, Hannah contrived to obtain an admission to the charity school, where he made great progress—retaining him at home, however, in the haymaking season, or whenever his services could be made available, to the great annoyance of the schoolmaster, whose favourite he is, and who piques himself so much on George's scholarship (your heavy, sluggish boy at country work often turns out quick at his book), that it is the general opinion that this much-vaunted pupil will, in process of time, be promoted to the post of assistant, and may possibly, in course of years, rise to the dignity of a parish schoolmaster in his own person; so that his sister, although still making him useful

at odd times, now considers George as pretty well off her hands, whilst his eldest brother, Tom, could take an under-gardener's place, directly, if he were not too important at home to be spared even for a day.

In short, during the five years that she has ruled at the Shaw cottage, the world has gone well with Hannah Bint. Her cow, her calves, her pigs, her bees, her poultry, have each, in their several ways, thriven and prospered. She has even brought Watch to like buttermilk as well as strong beer, and has nearly persuaded her father (to whose wants and wishes she is most anxiously attentive) to accept of milk as a substitute for gin.

Not but Hannah hath had her enemies as well as her betters. Why should she not? The old woman at the lodge, who always piqued herself on being spiteful, and crying down new ways, foretold from the first she would come to no good, and could not forgive her for falsifying her prediction; and Betty Barnes, the slatternly widow of a tippling farmer, who rented a field, and set up a cow herself, and was universally discarded for insufferable dirt, said all that the wit of an



THE ROAD WINDING DOWN THE HILL



envious woman could devise against Hannah and her Alderney.

Even Ned Miles, the keeper, her next neighbour, who had whilom held entire sway over the Shaw common, as well as its coppices, grumbled as much as so good-natured and genial a person could grumble, when he found a little girl sharing his dominion, a cow grazing beside his pony, and vulgar cocks and hens hovering around the buckwheat destined to feed his noble pheasants.

Nobody that had been accustomed to see that paragon of keepers, so tall and manly, and pleasant looking, with his merry eye, and his knowing smile, striding gaily along, in his green coat, and his gold-laced hat, with Neptune, his noble Newfoundland dog (a retriever is the sporting word), and his beautiful spaniel Flirt at his heels, could conceive how askew he looked, when he first found Hannah and Watch holding equal reign over his old territory, the Shaw common.

Yes! Hannah hath had her enemies; but they are passing away. The old woman at the lodge is dead, poor creature; and Betty Barnes, having herself taken to tippling,

lost the few friends she once possessed, and looks, luckless wretch, as if she would soon die too!—and the keeper?—why, he is not dead, or like to die; but the change that has taken place there is the most astonishing of all—except, perhaps, the change in Hannah herself.

Few damsels of twelve years old, generally a very pretty age, were less pretty than Hannah Bint. Short and stunted in her figure, thin in face, sharp in feature, with a muddled complexion, wild sunburnt hair, and eyes whose very brightness had in them something startling, over-informed, super-subtle, too clever for her age—at twelve years old she had quite the air of a little old fairy.

Now, at seventeen, matters are mended. Her complexion has cleared; her countenance has developed itself; her figure has shot up into height and lightness, and a sort of rustic grace; her bright, acute eye is softened and sweetened by the womanly wish to please; her hair is trimmed, and curled and brushed, with exquisite neatness; and her whole dress arranged with that nice attention to the becoming, the suitable both in form and texture, which

would be called the highest degree of coquetry, if it did not deserve the better name of propriety.

The lass is really pretty, and Ned Miles has discovered that she is so. There he stands, the rogue, close at her side (for he hath joined her whilst we have been telling her little story, and the milking is over!)—there he stands, holding her milk-pail in one hand, and stroking Watch with the other; whilst she is returning the compliment, by patting Neptune's magnificent head. There they stand, as much like lovers as may be; he smiling, and she blushing—he never looking so handsome nor she so pretty in all their lives. There they stand, in blessed forgetfulness of all except each other; as happy a couple as ever trod the earth. There they stand, and one would not disturb them for all the milk and butter in Christendom. I should not wonder if they were fixing the wedding day.

## DAME WILSON

The prettiest cottage on our village green is the little dwelling of Dame Wilson. It stands in a corner of the common, where the hedge-rows go curving off into a sort of bay round a clear bright pond, the earliest haunt of the swallow.

A deep, woody, green lane, such as Hobbema or Ruysdael might have painted—a lane that hints of nightingales—forms one boundary of the garden, and a sloping meadow the other; whilst the cottage itself, a low thatched irregular building, backed by a blooming orchard, and covered with honeysuckle and jessamine, looks like the chosen abode of snugness and comfort. And so it is.

Dame Wilson was a respected servant in a most respectable family, where she passed all the early part of her life, and which she quitted only on her marriage with a man of character and industry, and of that peculiar universality

of genius which forms, what is called in country phrase, a handy fellow.

He could do any sort of work; was thatcher, carpenter, bricklayer, painter, gardener, game-keeper, "everything by turns, and nothing long". No job came amiss to him. He killed pigs, mended shoes, cleaned clocks, doctored cows, dogs, and horses, and even went as far as bleeding and drawing teeth in his experiments on the human subject.

In addition to these multifarious talents, he was ready, obliging, and unfearing; jovial withal, and fond of good fellowship; and endowed with a promptness of resource which made him the general adviser of the stupid, the puzzled, and the timid.

He was universally admitted to be the cleverest man in the parish; and his death, which happened about ten years ago, in consequence of standing in the water, drawing a pond for one neighbour, at a time when he was overheated by loading hay for another, made quite a gap in our village commonwealth.

John Wilson had no rival, and has had no successor; for the Robert Ellis, whom certain youngsters would fain exalt to a co-

partnery of fame, is simply nobody—a bell-ringer—a ballad singer—a troller of profane catches—a fiddler—a bruiser—a loller on ale-house benches—a teller of good stories—a mimic—a poet! What is all this to compare with the solid parts of John Wilson? Whose clock hath Robert Ellis cleaned?—whose windows hath he mended?—whose dog hath he broken?—whose pigs hath he ringed?—whose pond hath he fished?—whose hay hath he saved?—whose cow hath he cured?—whose calf hath he killed?—whose teeth hath he drawn?—whom hath he bled? Tell me that, irreverent whipsters! No! John Wilson is not to be replaced. He was missed by the whole parish; and most of all he was missed at home. His excellent wife was left the sole guardian and protector of two fatherless girls; one an infant at her knee, the other a pretty handy lass about nine years old.

. Cast thus upon the world, there must have been much to endure, much to suffer; but it was borne with a smiling patience, a hopeful cheeriness of spirit, and a decent pride, which seemed to command success as well as respect in their struggle for independence.

Without assistance of any sort, by needle-work, by washing and mending lace and fine linen, and other skilful and profitable labours, and by the produce of her orchard and poultry, Dame Wilson contrived to maintain herself and her children in their old comfortable home.

There was no visible change; she and the little girls were as neat as ever; the house had still within and without the same sunshiny cleanliness, and the garden was still famous over all other gardens for its cloves, and stocks, and double wallflowers.

But the sweetest flower of the garden, and the joy and pride of her mother's heart, was her daughter Hannah. Well might she be proud of her!

## HANNAH WILSON

At sixteen Hannah Wilson was, beyond a doubt, the prettiest girl in the village, and the best. Her beauty was quite in a different style from the common country rosebud—far more choice and rare. Its chief characteristic was modesty.

A light youthful figure, exquisitely graceful and rapid in all its movements; springy, elastic, and buoyant as a bird, and almost as shy; a fair innocent face, with downcast blue eyes, and smiles and blushes coming and going almost with her thoughts; a low soft voice, sweet even in its monosyllables; a dress remarkable for neatness and propriety, and borrowing from her delicate beauty an air of superiority not its own—such was the outward woman of Hannah.

Her mind was very like her person; modest, graceful, gentle, affectionate, grateful, and generous above all. The generosity of the poor is always a very real and fine thing; they

give what they want; and Hannah was of all poor people the most generous. She loved to give; it was her pleasure, her luxury.

Rosy-cheeked apples, plums with the bloom on them, nosegays of cloves and blossomed myrtle; these were offerings which Hannah delighted to bring to those whom she loved, or those who had shown her kindness; whilst to such of her neighbours as needed other attentions than fruit and flowers, she would give her time, her assistance, her skill; for Hannah inherited her mother's dexterity in feminine employments, with something of her father's versatile power.

Besides being an excellent laundress, she was accomplished in all the arts of the needle, millinery, dressmaking, and plain work; a capital cutter-out, an incomparable mender, and endowed with a gift of altering, which made old things better than new. She had no rival at remaking garments, as half the turned gowns on the common can witness.

As a dairywoman, and a rearer of pigs and poultry, she was equally successful; none of her ducks and turkeys ever died of neglect or carelessness, or, to use the phrase of the

poultry yard on such occasions, of "ill-luck". Hannah's fowls never dreamed of sliding out of the world in such an ignoble way; they all lived to be killed, to make a noise at their deaths, as chickens should do.

She was also a famous "scholar"; kept accounts, wrote bills, read letters, and answered them; was a trusty accountant, and a safe confidante. There was no end to Hannah's usefulness or Hannah's kindness; and her prudence was equal to either.

Except to be kind or useful, she never left her home; attended no fairs, or revels, or mayings; went nowhere but to church; and seldom made a nearer approach to rustic revelry than by standing at her own garden gate on a Sunday evening, with her little sister in her hand, to look at the lads and lasses on the green. In short, our village beauty had fairly reached her twentieth year without a sweetheart, without the slightest suspicion of her having ever written a love letter on her own account; when, all on a sudden, appearances changed. She was missing at the "accustomed gate"; and one had seen a young man go into Dame Wilson's;

and another had descried a trim, elastic figure walking, not unaccompanied, down the shady lane. Matters were quite clear. Hannah had gotten a lover; and, when poor little Susan, who, deserted by her sister, ventured to peep rather nearer to the gay group, was laughingly questioned on the subject, the hesitating No, and the half Yes, of the smiling child, were equally conclusive.

Since the new marriage act, we, who belong to country magistrates, have gained a priority over the rest of the parish in matrimonial news. We (the privileged) see on a workday the names which the Sabbath announces to the generality. Many a blushing, awkward pair hath our little lame clerk (a sorry Cupid!) ushered in between dark and light to stammer and hanker, to bow and curtsy, to sign or make a mark, as it pleases Heaven.

One Saturday, at the usual hour, the limping clerk made his appearance; and, walking through our little hall, I saw a fine athletic young man, the very image of health and vigour, mental and bodily, holding the hand of a young woman, who with her head half buried in a geranium in the window, was turn-

ing bashfully away, listening, and yet not seeming to listen, to his tender whispers.

The shrinking grace of that bending figure was not to be mistaken. "Hannah!" and she went aside with me, and a rapid series of questions and answers conveyed the story of the courtship.

"William was," said Hannah, "a journeyman hatter in B. He had walked over one Sunday evening to see the cricketing, and then he came again. Her mother liked him. Everybody liked her William—and she had promised—she was going—was it wrong?"

"Oh no!—and where are you to live?"

"William has got a room in B. He works for Mr. Smith, the rich hatter in the market-place, and Mr. Smith speaks of him—oh, so well! But William will not tell me where our room is. I suppose in some narrow street or lane, which he is afraid I shall not like, as our common is so pleasant. He little thinks—anywhere." She stopped suddenly; but her blush and her clasped hands finished the sentence, "anywhere with him!"

"And when is the happy day?"

"On Monday fortnight, madam," said the

bridegroom elect, advancing with the little clerk to summon Hannah to the parlour, "the earliest day possible." He drew her arm through his, and we parted.

The Monday fortnight was a glorious morning; one of those rare November days when the sky and the air are soft and bright as in April.

"What a beautiful day for Hannah!" was the first exclamation at the breakfast table.

"Did she tell you where they should dine?"

"No, ma'am; I forgot to ask."

"I can tell you," said the master of the house, with somewhat of good-humoured importance in his air, somewhat of the look of a man who, having kept a secret as long as it was necessary, is not sorry to get rid of the burthen.

"I can tell you: in London."

"In London!"

"Yes. Your little favourite has been in high luck. She has married the only son of one of the best and richest men in B., Mr. Smith, the great hatter. It is quite a romance," continued he: "William Smith walked over one Sunday evening to see a match at cricket.

He saw our pretty Hannah, and forgot to look at the cricketers. After having gazed his fill, he approached to address her, and the little damsel was off like a bird. William did not like her the less for that, and thought of her the more. He came again and again; and at last contrived to tame this wild dove, and even to get the *entrée* of the cottage. Hearing Hannah talk is not the way to fall out of love with her. So William, at last finding his case serious, laid the matter before his father, and requested his consent to the marriage.

"Mr. Smith was at first a little startled; but William is an only son, and an excellent son; and, after talking with me, and looking at Hannah (I believe her sweet face was the more eloquent advocate of the two), he relented; and having a spice of his son's romance, finding that he had not mentioned his situation in life, he made a point of its being kept secret till the wedding-day.

"We have managed the business of settlements; and William, having discovered that his fair bride has some curiosity to see London (a curiosity, by the by, which I suspect she owes to you or poor Lucy), intends taking her

thither for a fortnight. He will then bring her home to one of the best houses in B., a fine garden, fine furniture, fine clothes, fine servants, and more money than she will know what to do with.

“Really the surprise of Lord E.’s farmer’s daughter, when, thinking she had married his steward, he brought her to Burleigh, and installed her as its mistress, could hardly have been greater. I hope the shock will not kill Hannah, though, as is said to have been the case with that poor lady.”

“Oh no! Hannah loves her husband too well. Anywhere with him!”

And I was right. Hannah has survived the shock. She is returned to B., and I have been to call on her. I never saw anything so delicate and bride-like as she looked in her white gown and her lace mob, in a room light and simple, and tasteful and elegant, with nothing fine except some beautiful greenhouse plants. Her reception was a charming mixture of sweetness and modesty, a little more respectful than usual, and far more shamefaced! Poor thing! her cheeks must have pained her! But this was the only difference.

In everything else she is still the same Hannah, and has lost none of her old habits of kindness and gratitude. She was making a handsome matronly cap, evidently for her mother, and spoke, even with tears, of her new father's goodness to her and to Susan. She would fetch the cake and wine herself, and would gather, in spite of all remonstrance, some of her choicest flowers as a parting nosegay.

She did, indeed, just hint at her troubles with visitors and servants,—how strange and sad it was! seemed distressed at ringing the bell, and visibly shrank from the sound of a double knock. But, in spite of these calamities, Hannah is a happy woman. The double rap was her husband's; and the glow on her cheek, and the smile of her lips and eyes when he appeared, spoke more plainly than ever, "Anywhere with him!"





C.M.H

HANNAH AND HER COW

## DORA CRESWELL

Few things are more delightful than to saunter along these green lanes of ours in the busy harvest-time; the deep verdure of the hedgerows, and the strong shadow of the trees, contrasting so vividly with the fields, partly waving with golden corn, partly studded with regular piles of heavy wheat sheaves; the whole population abroad; the whole earth teeming with fruitfulness, and the bright autumn sun careering overhead amidst the deep blue sky, and the fleecy clouds of the most glowing and least fickle of the seasons.

Even a solitary walk loses its loneliness in the general cheerfulness of nature. The air is gay with bees and butterflies; the robin twitters from amongst the ripening hazel nuts; and you cannot proceed a quarter of a mile without encountering some merry group of leasers, or some long line of majestic wains, groaning under their rich burthen, brushing the close hedges on either side, and knocking

their tall tops against the overhanging trees, the very image of ponderous plenty.

Pleasant, however, as such a procession is to look at, it is somewhat dangerous to meet, especially in a narrow lane; and I thought myself very fortunate one day last August, in being so near a five-barred gate, as to be enabled to escape from a number of labourers and harvest wagons, sufficiently bulky and noisy to convoy half the wheat in the parish.

On they went, men, women, and children, shouting, laughing, and singing in joyous expectation of the coming harvest-home; the very wagons nodding from side to side as if tipsy, and threatening every moment to break down bank, and tree, and hedge, and crush every article that opposed them. It would have been as safe to encounter the car of Juggernaut. I blessed my stars for my escape; and after leaning on the friendly gate until the last gleaner had passed, a ragged rogue of seven years old, who, with hair as white as flax, a skin as brown as a berry, and features as grotesque as an Indian idol, was brandishing his tuft of wheat-ears, and shrieking forth, in a shrill girlish voice, and with a most

ludicrous gravity, the popular song of "Buy a broom". After watching this young gentleman (the urchin is of my acquaintance) as long as a curve in the lane would permit, I turned to examine in what spot chance had placed me, and found before my eyes another picture of rural life, but one as different from that which I had just witnessed as the Arcadian peasants of Poussin from the boors of Teniers, or weeds from flowers, or poetry from prose.

I had taken refuge in a harvest field belonging to my good neighbour, Farmer Creswell; a beautiful child lay on the ground at some little distance, whilst a young girl, resting from the labour of reaping, was twisting a rustic wreath of enamelled corn-flowers, brilliant poppies, snow-white lilybines, and light fragile harebells, mingled with tufts of the richest wheat-ears, around its hat.

There was something in the tender youthfulness of these two innocent creatures, in the pretty, though somewhat fantastic, occupation of the girl, the fresh wild-flowers, the ripe and swelling corn that harmonized with the season and the hour, and conjured up memories of "Dis and Proserpine", and of all that is

gorgeous and graceful in old mythology; of the lovely Lavinia of our own poet, and of that finest pastoral of the world, the far lovelier Ruth. But these fanciful associations soon vanished before the real sympathy excited by the actors of the scene, both of whom were known to me, and both objects of a sincere and lively interest.

The young girl, Dora Creswell, was the orphan niece of one of the wealthiest yeomen in our part of the world, the only child of his only brother; and having lost both her parents whilst still an infant, had been reared by her widowed uncle as fondly and carefully as his own son Walter.

He said that he loved her quite as well, perhaps he loved her better; for though it was impossible for a father not to be proud of the bold handsome youth, who at eighteen had a man's strength and a man's stature; was the best ringer, the best cricketer, and the best shot in the county; yet the fairy Dora, who, nearly ten years younger, was at once his handmaid, his housekeeper, his plaything, and his companion, was evidently the apple of his eye.

Our good farmer praised her accomplishments, as men of his class are wont to boast of a highbred horse, or a favourite greyhound. ~~12/5~~

She could make a shirt and a pudding, darn stockings, rear poultry, keep accounts, and read the newspaper; was as famous for gooseberry wine as Mrs. Primrose, and could compound a syllabub with any dairywoman in the county. There was not so handy a little creature anywhere; so thoughtful and trusty about the house, and yet out of doors as gay as a lark, and as wild as the wind; nobody was like his Dora.

So said, and so thought, Farmer Creswell: and before Dora was ten years old, he had resolved that in due time she should marry his son Walter, and had informed both parties of his intention.

Now, Farmer Creswell's intentions were well known to be as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. He was a fair specimen of an English yeoman, a tall, square-built, muscular man, stout and active, with a resolute countenance, a keen eye, and an intelligent smile; his temper was boisterous and irascible,

generous and kind to those whom he loved, but quick to take offence, and slow to pardon, expecting and exacting obedience from all about him.

With all Dora's good gifts, the sweet and yielding nature of the gentle and submissive little girl was undoubtedly the chief cause of her uncle's partiality. Above all, he was obstinate in the highest degree, had never been known to yield a point, or change a resolution; and the fault was the more inveterate because he called it firmness, and accounted it a virtue.

For the rest, he was a person of excellent principle, and perfect integrity, clear-headed, prudent, and sagacious; fond of agricultural experiments, which he pursued cautiously and successfully; a good farmer, and a good man..

His son Walter, who was in person a handsome likeness of his father, resembled him also in many points of character, was equally obstinate, and far more fiery, hot, and bold.

He loved his pretty cousin, much as he would have loved a favourite sister, and might

very possibly, if let alone, have become attached to her as his father wished; but to be dictated to, to be chained down to a distant engagement, to hold himself bound to a mere child, the very idea was absurd; and restraining with difficulty an abrupt denial, he walked down into the village, predisposed, out of sheer contradiction, to fall in love with the first young woman who should come in his way; and he did fall in love accordingly.

Mary Hay, the object of his ill-fated passion, was the daughter of the respectable mistress of a small endowed school at the other end of the parish. She was a delicate, interesting creature, with a slight, drooping figure, and a fair downcast face, like a snowdrop, forming such a contrast with her gay and gallant wooer as Love is often pleased to bring together.

The courtship was secret and tedious, and prolonged from months to years; for Mary shrank from the painful contest which she knew that an avowal of their attachment would occasion.

At length her mother died, and deprived of home and maintenance, she reluctantly con-

sented to a private marriage; an immediate discovery ensued, and was followed by all the evils, and more than all, that her worst fears had anticipated.

Her husband was turned from the house of his father, and in less than three months, his death, from fever, left her a desolate and penniless widow, unowned and unassisted by the stern parent, on whose unrelenting temper neither the death of his son, nor the birth of his grandson, seemed to make the slightest impression.

But for the general sympathy excited by the deplorable situation and blameless demeanour of the widowed bride, she and her infant might have taken refuge in the workhouse. The whole neighbourhood was zealous to relieve and to serve them; but their most liberal benefactress, their most devoted friend, was poor Dora.

Considering her uncle's partiality to herself as the primary cause of all this misery, she felt like a guilty creature: and casting off at once

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her native timidity, she had repeatedly braved his anger, by the most earnest supplications for mercy and for pardon; and when this

proved unavailing, she tried to lessen their distresses by all the assistance that her small means would permit. 1/5

Every shilling of her pocket money she expended upon her poor cousins; worked for them, begged for them, and transferred to them every present that was made to herself, from a silk frock to a penny tartlet. a/cn.

Everything that was her own she gave, but nothing of her uncle's; for, though sorely tempted to transfer some of the plenty around her to those whose claims seemed so just, and whose need was so urgent, Dora felt that she was trusted, and that she must prove herself trustworthy.

Such was the state of affairs at the time of my encounter with Dora and little Walter in the harvest field; the rest will be best told in the course of our dialogue. it / ;

"And so, madam! I cannot bear to see my dear cousin Mary so sick and so melancholy; and the dear, dear child, that a king might be proud of—only look at him!" exclaimed Dora, interrupting herself, as the beautiful child, sitting on the ground in all the placid dignity of infancy, looked up at me and smiled in

my face; "only look at him," continued she, "and think of that dear boy, and his dear mother living on charity, and they my uncle's lawful heirs, whilst I, who have no right whatever, no claim at all—I that, compared to them, am but a far-off kinswoman, the mere creature of his bounty, should revel in comfort, and in plenty, and they starving! I cannot bear it, and I will not. And then the wrong that he is doing himself, he that is really so good and kind, to be called a hard-hearted tyrant by the whole countryside. And he is unhappy himself, too; I know that he is; so tired as he comes home, he will walk about his room half the night; and often at meal times he will drop his knife and fork, and sigh so heavily. He may turn me out of doors, as he threatened; or, what is worse, call me ungrateful, or undutiful; but he shall see this boy."

"He never has seen him, then? and that is the reason you are tricking him out so prettily."

"Yes, ma'am. Mind what I told you, Walter, and hold up your hat, and say what I ~~saw~~ you."

"Ganpapa's fowers!" stammered the pretty

boy, in his sweet childish voice, the first words that I had ever heard him speak.

“Grandpapa’s flowers!” said his zealous preceptress.

“Ganpapa’s fowers!” echoed the boy.

“Shall you take the child to the house, Dora?” asked I.

“No, ma’am, for I look for my uncle here every minute, and this is the best place to ask a favour in, for the very sight of the great crop puts him in good humour; not so much on account of the profits, but because the land never bore half so much before, and it’s all owing to his management in dressing and drilling. I came reaping here to-day, on purpose to please him; for though he says he does not wish me to work in the fields, I know he likes it; and here he shall see little Walter.

“Do you think he can resist him, ma’am?” continued Dora, leaning over her infant cousin with the grace and fondness of a young Madonna; “do you think he can resist him, poor child, so helpless, so harmless; his own blood too, and so like his father? no heart could be hard enough to hold out, and I am sure that he will not.

"Only," pursued Dora, relapsing into her girlish tone and attitude, as a cold fear crossed her enthusiastic hope—"only I'm half afraid that Walter will cry. It's strange, when one wants anything to behave particularly well, how sure it is to be naughty, my pets especially.

"I remember when my Lady Countess came on purpose to see our white peacock that we got in a present from India, the obstinate bird ran away behind a beanstack, and would not spread his train, to show the dead white spots on his glossy white feathers, all we could do. Her ladyship was quite angry. And my red and yellow marvel of Peru, which used to blow at four in the afternoon, as regular as the clock struck, was not open the other day at five, when dear Miss Ellen came to paint it, though the sun was shining as bright as it does now. If Walter should scream and cry; for my uncle does sometimes look so stern; and then it's Saturday, and he has such a beard; if the child should be frightened! Be sure, Walter, you don't cry!" said Dora, in great alarm.

"Ganpapa's fowers," replied the smiling

boy, holding up his hat; and his young protectress was comforted.

At that moment the farmer was heard whistling to his dog in a neighbouring field, and, fearful that my presence might injure the cause, I departed, my thoughts full of the noble little girl and her generous purpose.

I had promised to call the next afternoon to learn her success; and passing beside the harvest field in my way, I found a group assembled there, which instantly dispelled my anxiety.

On the very spot where we had parted, I saw the good farmer himself, in his Sunday clothes, tossing little Walter in the air; the child laughing and screaming with delight, and his grandfather apparently quite as much delighted as himself. A pale, slender young woman, in deep mourning, stood looking at their gambols with an air of intense thankfulness; and Dora, the cause and sharer of all this happiness, was loitering behind, playing with the flowers in Walter's hat, which she was holding in her hand.

Catching my eye, the sweet girl came to me instantly.

"I see how it is, my dear Dora, and I give you joy from the bottom of my heart. Little Walter behaved well, then?"

"Oh, he behaved like an angel."

"Did he say granpapa's fowers?"

"Nobody spoke a word. The moment the child took off his hat and looked up, the truth seemed to flash on my uncle, and to melt his heart at once—the boy is so like his father. He knew him instantly, and caught him up in his arms, and hugged him just as he is hugging him now."

"And the beard, Dora?"

"Why, that seemed to take the child's fancy; he put up his little hands and stroked it, and laughed in his grandfather's face, and flung his chubby arms round his neck, and held out his sweet mouth to be kissed; and how my uncle did kiss him! I thought he never would have done; and then he sat down on a wheat-sheaf and cried, and I cried too!"

"Very strange that one should cry for happiness!" added Dora, as some large drops fell on the wreath which she was adjusting round Walter's hat; "very strange," repeated she, looking up with a bright smile, and

brushing away the tears from her rosy cheeks with a bunch of corn-flowers; "very strange that I should cry when I am the happiest creature alive; for Mary and Walter are to live with us; and my dear uncle, instead of being angry with me, says that he loves me better than ever. How very strange it is," said Dora, as the tears poured down faster and faster, "that I should be so foolish as to cry."

## THE MOLE-CATCHER

There are no more delightful or unfailing associations than those afforded by the various operations of the husbandman, and the changes on the fair face of nature. We all know that busy troops of reapers come with the yellow corn; whilst the yellow leaf brings a no less busy train of ploughmen and seedsmen preparing the ground for fresh harvests; that woodbines and wild roses, flaunting in the blossomy hedgerows, give token of the gay bands of haymakers which enliven the meadows; and that the primroses, which begin to unfold their pale stars by the side of the green lanes, bear marks of the slow and weary female processions, the gangs of tired yet talkative bean-setters, who defile twice a day through the intricate mazes of our cross-country roads. These are general associations as well known and as universally recognized as the union of mince pies and Christmas.

I have one, more private and peculiar—one, perhaps, the more strongly impressed on my mind, because the impression may be almost confined to myself. The full flush of violets which, about the middle of March, seldom fails to perfume the whole earth, always brings to my recollection one solitary and silent coadjutor of the husbandman's labours, as unlike a violet as possible—Isaac Bint, the mole-catcher.

I used to meet him every spring when we lived at our old house, whose park-like paddock, with its finely-clumped oaks and elms, and its richly-timbered hedgerows, edging into wild, rude, and solemn fir plantations, dark, and rough, and hoary, formed for so many years my constant and favourite walk.

Here, especially under the great horse-chestnut, and where the bank rose high and naked above the lane, crowned only with a tuft of golden broom; here the sweetest and prettiest of wild flowers, whose very name hath a charm, grew like a carpet under one's feet, enamelling the young green grass with their white and purple blossoms, and loading the air with their delicious fragrance; here I used to come almost every morning during the violet

tide; and here almost every morning I was sure to meet Isaac Bint.

I think that he fixed himself the more firmly in my memory by his singular contrast with the beauty and cheerfulness of the scenery and the season. Isaac is a tall, lean, gloomy personage, with whom the clock of life seems to stand still. He has looked sixty-five for these last twenty years, although his dark hair and beard and firm manly stride almost contradict the evidence of his sunken cheeks and deeply-lined forehead. The stride is awful: he hath the stalk of a ghost. His whole air and bearing savour of one that comes from under ground. His appearance is "of the earth, earthy". His clothes, hands, and face are of the colour of the mould in which he delves. The little round traps which hang behind him over one shoulder, as well as the strings of dead moles which embellish the other, are encrusted with dirt like a tombstone; and the staff which he plunges into the little hillocks, by which he traces the course of his small quarry, returns a hollow sound, as if tapping on the lid of a coffin. Images of the church-yard come, one does not know how, with his

presence. Indeed he does officiate as assistant to the sexton in his capacity of gravedigger, chosen, as it should seem, from a natural fitness; a fine sense of congruity in good Joseph Reed, the functionary in question, who felt, without knowing why, that, of all men in the parish, Isaac Bint was best fitted to that solemn office.

His remarkable gift of silence adds much to the impression produced by his remarkable figure. I don't think that I ever heard him speak three words in my life. An approach of that bony hand to that earthy leather cap was the greatest effort of courtesy that my daily salutations could extort from him. For this silence Isaac has reasons good. He hath a reputation to support. His words are too precious to be wasted. Our mole-catcher, ragged as he looks, is the wise man of the village, the oracle of the village inn, foresees the weather, charms away agues, tells fortunes by the stars, and writes notes upon the almanack, turning and twisting about the predictions after a fashion so ingenious, that it is a moot point which is oftenest wrong—Isaac Bint or Francis Moore. In one eminent

instance our friend was, however, eminently right. He had the good luck to prophesy before sundry witnesses—some of them sober—in the taproom of the Bell—he then sitting, pipe in mouth, on the settle at the right-hand side of the fire, whilst Jacob Frost occupied the left—he had the good fortune to foretell, on New Year's Day, 1812, the downfall of Napoleon Buonaparte—a piece of soothsayership which has established his reputation and dumbfounded all doubters and cavillers ever since; but which would certainly have been more striking if he had not annually uttered the same prediction from the same place from the time that the aforesaid Napoleon became first consul. But this small circumstance is entirely overlooked by Isaac and his admirers, and they believe in him, and he believes in the stars more firmly than ever.

Our mole-catcher is, as might be conjectured, an old bachelor. Your married man hath more of this world about him—is less, so to say, planet-struck. A thorough old bachelor is Isaac, a contemner and maligner of the sex, a complete and decided woman-hater. Female frailty is the only subject on

which he hath ever been known to dilate. He will not even charm away their agues or tell their fortunes, and indeed holds them to be unworthy the notice of the stars.

No woman contaminates his household. He lives on the edge of a pretty bit of woodland scenery, called the Penge, in a snug cottage of two rooms, of his own building, surrounded by a garden cribbed from the waste, well fenced with quickset, and well stocked with fruit trees, herbs, and flowers. One large apple tree extends over the roof—a pretty bit of colour when in blossom, contrasted with the thatch of the little dwelling, and relieved by the dark wood behind. Although the owner be solitary, his demesne is sufficiently populous. A long row of beehives extends along the warmest side of the garden—for Isaac's honey is celebrated far and near; a pig occupies a commodious sty at one corner; and large flocks of ducks and geese (for which the Penge, whose glades are intersected by water, is famous) are generally waiting round a back gate leading to a spacious shed, far larger than Isaac's own cottage, which serves for their feeding and roosting place. The great

tameness of all these creatures—for the ducks and geese flutter round him the moment he approaches, and the very pig follows him like a dog—gives no equivocal testimony of the kindness of our mole-catcher's nature. A circumstance of recent occurrence puts his humanity beyond a doubt.

Amongst the probable causes of Isaac's dislike to women may be reckoned the fact of his living in a female neighbourhood (for the Penge is almost peopled with duck-rearers and goose-crammers of the duck and goose gender), and being himself exceedingly unpopular amongst the fair poultry-feeders of that watery vicinity. He beat them at their own weapons; produced at Midsummer geese fit for Michaelmas; and raised ducks so precocious, that the gardeners complained of them as forerunning their vegetable accompaniments; and “*panting peas* toiled after them in vain”.

In short, the Naiads of the Penge found themselves driven out of B—— market by an interloper, and that interloper a man, who had no manner of right to possess any skill in an accomplishment so feminine as duck-rearing; and being no ways inferior in another female

accomplishment, called scolding, to their sister-nymphs of Billingsgate, they set up a clamour and a cackle which might rival the din of their own gooseries at feeding-time, and would inevitably have frightened from the field any competitor less impenetrable than our hero.

But Isaac is not a man to shrink from so small an evil as female scolding. He stalked through it all in mute disdain—looking now at his mole-traps, and now at the stars—pretending not to hear, and very probably not hearing. At first this scorn, more provoking than any retort, only excited his enemies to fresh attacks; but one cannot be always answering another person's silence. The flame which had blazed so fiercely at last burned itself out, and peace reigned once more in the green alleys of Penge-wood.

One, however, of his adversaries—his nearest neighbour—still remained unsilenced.

Margery Grover was a very old and poor woman, whom age and disease had bent almost to the earth; shaken by palsy, pinched by penury, and soured by misfortune—a moving bundle of misery and rags. Two centuries ago she would have been burnt for a witch; now

she starved and grumbled on the parish allowance; trying to eke out a scanty subsistence by the dubious profits gained from the produce of two geese and a lame gander, once the unmolested tenants of a greenish pool, situate right between her dwelling and Isaac's, but whose watery dominion had been invaded by his flourishing colony.

This was the cause of feud; and although Isaac would willingly, from a mingled sense of justice and of pity, have yielded the point to the poor old creature, especially as ponds are there almost as plentiful as blackberries, yet it was not so easy to control the habits and inclinations of their feathered subjects, who all perversely fancied that particular pool; and various accidents and skirmishes occurred, in which the ill-fed and weak birds of Margery had generally the worst of the fray.

One of her early goslings was drowned—an accident which may happen even to waterfowl; and her lame gander, a sort of pet with the poor old woman, injured in his well leg; and Margery vented curses as bitter as those of Sycorax; and Isaac, certainly the most superstitious personage in the parish, the most

thorough believer in his own gifts and predictions, was fain to nail a horseshoe on his door for the defence of his property, and to wear one of his own ague charms about his neck for his personal protection.

Poor old Margery! A hard winter came; and the feeble, tottering creature shook in the frosty air like an aspen leaf; and the hovel in which she dwelt—for nothing could prevail on her to try the shelter of the workhouse—shook like herself at every blast. She was not quite alone either in the world or in her poor hut: husband, children, and grandchildren had passed away; but one young and innocent being, a great-grandson, the last of her descendants, remained, a helpless dependent on one almost as helpless as himself.

Little Harry Grover was a shrunken, stunted boy of five years old, tattered and squalid like his granddame, and, at first sight, presented almost as miserable a specimen of childhood as Margery herself did of age. There was even a likeness between them, although the fierce blue eye of Margery had, in the boy, a mild appealing look, which entirely changed the whole expression of the countenance. A gentle and

a peaceful boy was Harry, and, above all, a useful.

It was wonderful how many ears of corn in the autumn, and sticks in the winter, his little hands could pick up; how well he could make a fire, and boil the kettle, and sweep the hearth, and cram the goslings! Never was a handier boy or a trustier; and when the united effects of cold, and age, and rheumatism confined poor Margery to her poor bed, the child continued to perform his accustomed offices; fetching the money from the vestry, buying the loaf at the baker's, keeping house, and nursing the sick woman, with a kindness and thoughtfulness, which none but those who know the careful ways to which necessity trains cottage children would deem credible; and Margery, a woman of strong passions, strong prejudices, and strong affections, who had lived in and for the desolate boy, felt the approach of death embittered by the certainty that the workhouse, always the scene of her dread and loathing, would be the only refuge for the poor orphan.

Death, however, came on visibly and rapidly; and she sent for the overseer to beseech him to put Harry to board in some decent cottage;

she could not die in peace until he had promised; the fear of the innocent child's being contaminated by wicked boys and godless women preyed upon her soul; she implored, she conjured. The overseer, a kind but timid man, hesitated, and was beginning a puzzled speech about the bench and the vestry, when another voice was heard from the door of the cottage.

"Margery," said our friend Isaac, "will you trust Harry to me? I am a poor man, to be sure; but, between earning and saving, there'll be enough for me and little Harry. 'Tis as good a boy as ever lived, and I'll try to keep him so. Trust him to me, and I'll be a father to him. I can't say more."

"God bless thee, Isaac Bint! God bless thee!" was all poor Margery could reply.

They were the last words she ever spoke. And little Harry is living with our good molecatcher, and is growing plump and rosy; and Margery's other pet, the lame gander, lives and thrives with them too.

## LOST AND WON

“Nay, but, my dear Letty——”

“Don’t dear Letty me, Mr. Paul Holton. Have not the East-Woodhay Eleven beaten the Hazelby Eleven for the first time in the memory of man, and is it not entirely your fault? Answer me that, sir! Did not you insist on taking James White’s place when he got that little knock on the leg with the ball last night, though James, poor fellow, maintained to the last that he could play better with one leg than you with two? Did not you insist on taking poor James’s place, and did you get a single notch in either innings? And did you not miss three catches, three fair catches, Mr. Paul Holton? Might not you twice have caught out John Brown, who, as all the world knows, hits up? And did not a ball from the edge of Tom Taylor’s bat come into your hands, absolutely into your hands, and did not you let her go?”

And did not Tom Taylor after that get forty-five runs in the same innings, and thereby win the game? That a man should pretend to play at cricket and not be able to hold the ball when he has her in his hands! Oh, if I had been there!"

"You! Why, Letty——"

"Don't Letty me, sir. Don't talk to me. I am going home."

"With all my heart, Miss Letitia Dale. I have the honour, madam, to wish you a good evening."

And each turned away at a smart pace, and the one went westward and the other eastward-ho.

This unloverlike parting occurred on Hazelby Down one fine afternoon in the Whitsun-week, between a couple whom all Hazelby, and Aberleigh to boot, had, for at least a month before, set down as lovers—Letty Dale, the pretty daughter of the jolly old tanner, and Paul Holton, a rich young yeoman, on a visit in the place.

Letty's angry speech will sufficiently explain their mutual provocation, although, to enter fully into her feelings, one must be born in

a cricketing parish, and sprung of a cricketing family, and be accustomed to rest that very uncertain and arbitrary standard, the point of honour, on beating our rivals and next neighbours in the annual match—for juxtaposition is a great sharpener of rivalry, as Dr. Johnson knew, when, to please the inhabitants of Plymouth, he abused the good folks who lived at Dock; moreover, one must be also a quick, zealous, ardent, hotheaded, warmhearted girl like Letty, a beauty and an heiress, quite unused to disappointment, and not a little in love, and then we shall not wonder, in the first place, that she should be unreasonably angry, or, in the next, that before she had walked half a mile her anger vanished, and was succeeded by tender relentings and earnest wishes for a full and perfect reconciliation. “He’ll be sure to call to-morrow morning,” thought Letty to herself. “He said he would, before this unlucky cricket-playing. He told me that he had something to say, something particular. I wonder what it can be!” thought poor Letty. “To be sure, he never has said anything about liking me—but still—and then Aunt Judith, and Fanny Wright, and all the

neighbours say—— However, I shall know to-morrow."

And home she tripped to the pleasant house by the tanyard, as happy as if the East-Woodhay men had not beaten the men of Hazelby. "I shall not see him before to-morrow, though," repeated Letty to herself, and immediately repaired to her pretty flower garden, the little gate of which opened on a path leading from the Down to the street—a path that, for obvious reasons, Paul was wont to prefer—and began tying up her carnations in the dusk of the evening, and watering her geraniums by the light of the moon, until it was so late that she was fain to return, disappointed, to the house, repeating to herself, "I shall certainly see him to-morrow."

Far different were the feelings of the chidden swain. Well-a-day for the age of chivalry! the happy times of knights and paladins, when a lecture from a lady's rosy lip, or a buffet from her lily hand, would have been received as humbly and as thankfully as the benedicite from a mitred abbot, or the accolade from a king's sword! Alas for the days of chivalry! They are gone, and, I fear me, for ever. For

certain our present hero was not born to revive them.

Paul Holton was a well-looking and well-educated young farmer, just returned from the north, whither he had been sent for agricultural improvement, and now on the lookout for a farm and a wife, both of which he thought he had found at Hazelby, where he had come on the double errand of visiting some distant relations, and letting two or three small houses recently fallen into his possession. As owner of these houses, all situate in the town, he had claimed a right to join the Hazelby Eleven, mainly induced to avail himself of the privilege by the hope of winning favour in the eyes of the ungrateful fair one, whose animated character, as well as her sparkling beauty, had delighted his fancy, and apparently won his heart, until her rude attack on his play armed all the vanity of man against her attractions.

Love is more intimately connected with self-love than people are willing to imagine; and Paul Holton's had been thoroughly mortified. Besides, if his fair mistress's character were somewhat too impetuous, his was greatly

over-firm. So he said to himself: "The girl is a pretty girl, but far too much of a shrew for my taming. I am no Petruchio to master this Katherine. 'I come to wive it happily in Padua'; and let her father be as rich as he may, I'll none of her." And, mistaking anger for indifference—no uncommon delusion in a love quarrel—off he set within the hour, thinking so very much of punishing the saucy beauty, that he entirely forgot the possibility of some of the pains falling to his own share.

The first tidings that Letty heard the next morning were that Mr. Paul Holton had departed overnight, having authorized his cousin to let his houses, and to decline the large farm, for which he was in treaty; the next intelligence informed her that he was settled in Sussex; and then his relation left Hazelby, and poor Letty heard no more.

Poor Letty! Even in a common parting for a common journey, she who stays behind is the object of pity: how much more so when he who goes, goes never to return, and carries with him the fond affection, the treasured hopes, of a young unpractised heart,

"And gentle wishes long subdued—  
Subdued and cherish'd long"!

Poor, poor Letty!

Three years passed away, and brought much of change to our country maiden and to her fortunes. Her father, the jolly old tanner, a kind, frank, thoughtless man, as the cognomen would almost imply, one who did not think that there were such things as wickedness and ingratitude under the sun, became bound for a friend to a large amount: the friend proved a villain, and the jolly tanner was ruined. He and his daughter now lived in a small cottage near their former house; and at the point of time at which I have chosen to resume my story, the old man was endeavouring to persuade Letty, who had never attended a cricket match since the one which she had so much cause to remember, to accompany him the next day (Whit-Tuesday) to see the Hazelby Eleven again encounter their ancient antagonists, the men of East-Woodhay.

"Pray come, Letty," said the fond father; "I can't go without you; I have no pleasure anywhere without my Letty; and I want to see this match, for Isaac Hunt can't play on

account of the death of his mother, and they tell me that the East-Woodhay men have consented to our taking in another mate who practises the new Sussex bowling; I want to see that new-fangled mode. Do come, Letty!" And with a smothered sigh at the mention of Sussex, Letty consented.

Now old John Dale was not quite ingenuous with his pretty daughter. He did not tell her what he very well knew himself, that the bowler in question was no other than their sometime friend, Paul Holton, whom the business of letting his houses, or some other cause, not, perhaps, clearly defined even to himself, had brought to Hazelby on the eve of the match, and whose new method of bowling (in spite of his former mischances) the Hazelby Eleven were willing to try; the more so as they suspected, what, indeed, actually occurred, that the East-Woodhayites, who would have resisted the innovation of the Sussex system of delivering the ball in the hands of anyone else, would have no objection to let Paul Holton, whose bad playing was a standing joke amongst them, do his best or his worst in any way.

Not a word of this did John Dale say to

Letty; so that she was quite taken by surprise, when, having placed her father, now very infirm, in a comfortable chair, she sat down by his side on a little hillock of turf, and saw her recreant lover standing amongst a group of cricketers very near, and evidently gazing on her, just as he used to gaze three years before.

Perhaps Letty had never looked so pretty in her life as at that moment. She was simply dressed, as became her fallen fortunes. Her complexion was still coloured, like the apple blossom, with vivid red and white, but there was more of sensibility, more of the heart in its quivering mutability, its alternation of palleness and blushes; the blue eyes were still as bright, but they were oftener cast down; the smile was still as splendid, but far more rare; the girlish gaiety was gone, but it was replaced by womanly sweetness—sweetness and modesty formed now the chief expression of that lovely face, lovelier, far lovelier, than ever. So apparently thought Paul Holton, for he gazed and gazed with his whole soul in his eyes, in complete oblivion of cricket and cricketer, and the whole world. At last he recollect ed

himself, blushed and bowed, and advanced a few steps, as if to address her; but timid and irresolute, he turned away without speaking, joined the party who had now assembled round the wickets, the umpires called "Play!" and the game began.

East-Woodhay gained the toss and went in, and all eyes were fixed on the Sussex bowler. The ball was placed in his hands, and instantly the wicket was down, and the striker out—no other than Tom Taylor, the boast of his parish, and the best batsman in the county. "Accident, mere accident!" of course, cried East-Woodhay; but another, and another followed; few could stand against the fatal bowling, and none could get notches. A panic seized the whole side.

And then, as losers will, they began to exclaim against the system, called it a toss, a throw, a trick; anything but bowling, anything but cricket; railed at it as destroying the grace of the attitude, and the balance of the game; protested against being considered as beaten by such jugglery, and, finally, appealed to the umpires as to the fairness of the play. The umpires, men of conscience, and old cricketers,

hummed and hawed, and see-sawed; quoted contending precedents and jostling authorities; looked grave and wise, whilst even their little sticks of office seemed vibrating in puzzled importance.

Never were judges more sorely perplexed. At last they did as the sages of the bench often do in such cases—reserved the point of law, and desired them to “play out the play”. Accordingly the match was resumed; only twenty-seven notches being gained by the East-Woodhayites, in their first innings, and they entirely from the balls of the old Hazelby bowler, James White.

During the quarter of an hour's pause which the laws allow, the victorious man of Sussex went up to John Dale, who had watched him with a strange mixture of feeling, delighted to hear the stumps rattle, and to see opponent after opponent throw down his bat and walk off, and yet much annoyed at the new method by which the object was achieved. “We should not have called this cricket in my day,” said he, “and yet it knocks down the wickets gloriously too.” Letty, on her part, had watched the game with unmingle interest

and admiration. “He knew how much I liked to see a good cricketer,” thought she; yet still, when that identical good cricketer approached, she was seized with such a fit of shyness—call it modesty—that she left her seat and joined a group of young women at some distance.

Paul looked earnestly after her, but remained standing by her father, enquiring with affectionate interest after his health, and talking over the game and the bowling. At length he said, “I hope that I have not driven away Miss Letitia.”

“Call her Letty, Mr. Holton,” interrupted the old man; “plain Letty. We are poor folks now, and have no right to any other title than our own proper names, old John Dale and his daughter Letty. A good daughter she has been to me,” continued the fond father; “for when debts and losses took all that we had—for we paid to the uttermost farthing, Mr. Paul Holton; we owe no man a shilling—when all my earnings and savings were gone, and the house over our head—the house I was born in, the house she was born in—I loved it the better for that—taken away from us, then she gave up

the few hundreds she was entitled to in right of her blessed mother to purchase an annuity for the old man, whose trust in a villain had brought her to want."

"God bless her!" interrupted Paul Holton.

"Aye, and God will bless her," returned the old man, solemnly. "God will bless the dutiful child, who despoiled herself of all to support her old father!"

"Blessings on her dear, generous heart!" again ejaculated Paul; "and I was away and knew nothing of this."

"I knew nothing of it myself until the deed was completed," rejoined John Dale. "She was just of age, and the annuity was purchased and the money paid before she told me; and a cruel kindness it was to strip herself for my sake; it almost broke my heart when I heard the story. But even that was nothing," continued the good tanner, warming with his subject, "compared with her conduct since. If you could but see how she keeps the house, and how she waits upon me; her handiness, her cheerfulness, and all her pretty ways and contrivances to make me forget old times and old places. Poor thing! She must miss

her neat parlour and the flower garden she was so fond of, as much as I do my tanyard and the great hall, but she never seems to think of them, and never has spoken a hasty word since our misfortunes, for all you know, poor thing, she used to be a little quick-tempered."

"And I knew nothing of this," repeated Paul Holton, as, two or three of their best wickets being down, the Hazelby players summoned him to go in. "I knew nothing of all this."

Again all eyes were fixed on the Sussex cricketer, and at first he seemed likely to verify the predictions and confirm the hopes of the most malicious of his adversaries, by batting as badly as he had bowled well. He had not caught sight of the ball; his hits were weak, his defence insecure, and his mates began to tremble and his opponents to crow. Every hit seemed likely to be the last; he missed a leg ball of Ned Smith's; was all but caught out by Sam Newton; and East-Woodhay triumphed and Hazelby sat quaking, when a sudden glimpse of Letty, watching him with manifest anxiety, recalled her champion's wandering thoughts.

Gathering himself up, he stood before the wicket another man; knocked the ball hither and thither, to the turnpike, the coppice, the pond; got three, four, five at a hit; baffled the slow bowler, James Smith, and the fast bowler, Tom Taylor; got fifty-five notches off his own bat; stood out all the rest of his side; and so handled the adverse party when they went in that the match was won at a single innings, with six-and-thirty runs to spare.

Whilst his mates were discussing their victory, Paul Holton again approached the father and daughter, and this time she did not run away. "Letty, dear Letty," said he, "three years ago I lost the cricket match, and you were angry, and I was a fool. But Letty, dear Letty, this match is won, and if you could but know how deeply I have repented, how earnestly I have longed for this day. The world has gone well with me, Letty, for these three long years. I have wanted nothing but the treasure which I myself threw away, and now, if you would but let your father be my father, and my home your home; if you would but forgive me, Letty."

Letty's answer is not upon record; but it is

certain that Paul Holton walked home from the cricket ground that evening with old John Dale hanging on one arm, and John Dale's pretty daughter on the other; and that a month after the bells of Hazelby Church were ringing merrily in honour of one of the fairest and luckiest matches that ever cricketer lost and won.

## AMY LLOYD

One fine sunshiny March morning a lady, driving herself in a pony carriage through Aberleigh Lane, stopped beside a steep bank to look at a little girl and her dog in the adjoining field. The hedge had been closely cut, except where a tuft of hazel with its long tassels hung over some broom in full flower, and a straggling bush of the white-blossomed sloe was mixed with some branches of palms, from which the bees were already gathering honey.

The little girl was almost as busy as the bees; she was gathering violets, white violets and blue, with which the sunny bank was covered, and her little dog was barking at a flock of sheep feeding in that part of the field, for it was a turnip field that was hurdled off for their use. The dog was a small French spaniel, one of the prettiest ever seen, with long curly hair, snow white, except that the

ears and three or four spots on the body were yellow; large feathered feet, and bright, black eyes: just the sort of dog of which fine ladies love to make pets.

It was curious to see this beautiful little creature driving before it a great flock of sheep, ewes, lambs, and all, for sheep are sad cowards! And then, when driven to the hurdles, the sheep, cowards though they were, were forced to turn about; how they would take courage at sight of their enemy, advancing a step or two and pretending to look brave; then it was diverting to see how the little spaniel, frightened itself, would draw back barking towards its mistress, almost as sad a coward as the sheep. The lady sat watching their proceedings with great amusement, and at last addressed the little girl, a nice lass of ten years old in deep mourning.

"Whose pretty little dog is that, my dear?" asked the lady.

"Mine, madam," was the answer.

"And where did you get it? The breed is not common."

"It belonged to poor mamma. Poor papa brought it from France." And the look and

the tone told at once that poor Amy was an orphan.

"And you and the pretty dog—what's its name?" said the lady, interrupting herself.

"Flossy, ma'am—dear Flossy!" And Amy stooped to stroke the curly, silky, glossy coat which had probably gained Flossy this name; and Flossy in return jumped on his young mistress, and danced about her with tenfold glee.

"You and Flossy live hereabout?" enquired the lady.

"Close by, ma'am; at Court Farm; with my uncle and aunt Lloyd."

"And you love Flossy?" resumed the lady.  
"You would not like to part with him?"

"Part with Floss!" cried Amy. "Part with my own Flossy!" and she flung down her violets and caught her faithful pet in her arms, as if fearful of his being snatched away; and Floss, as if partaking of the fear, nestled up to his young mistress and pressed his head against her cheek.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear," replied the lady, preparing to drive on; "I am not going to steal your favourite, but I would give five

guineas for a dog like him; and, if ever you meet with such a one, you have only to send it to Lumley Castle. I am Lady Lumley," added she. "Good morning, love! Farewell, Flossy!" And, with a kind nod, the lady and the pony chaise passed rapidly by, and Amy and Flossy returned to Court Farm.

Amy was an orphan, and had only lately come to live with her good uncle and aunt Lloyd, rough, honest country people; and being a shy, meek-spirited child, who had just lost most affectionate parents, and had been used to soft voices and gentle manners, was so frightened at the loud speech of the farmer and the blunt ways of his wife, that she ran away from them as often as she could, and felt as forlorn and desolate as any little girl can do who has early learnt the blessed lesson of reliance on the Father of all. Her chief comfort at Court Farm was to pet Flossy and to talk to old Dame Clewer, the charwoman, who had been her own mother's nurse.

Dame Clewer had known better days; but having married late in life, and been soon left a widow, she had toiled early and late to bring up an only son; and all her little earnings had

gone to apprentice him to a carpenter, and keep him decently clothed.

He, although rather lively and thoughtless, was a dutiful and grateful son, and being now just out of his time, had gone to the next town to try to get work, and hoped to repay his good mother all her care and kindness by supporting her out of his earnings. He had told his mother so when setting off the week before, and she had repeated it with tears in her eyes to Amy—tears of joy; and Amy, on her return to the house, went immediately in search of her old friend, whom she knew to be washing there, partly to hear over again the story of Thomas Clewer's goodness, partly to tell her own adventure with Lady Lumley.

In the drying yard, as she expected, Amy found Dame Clewer; not, however, as she expected, smiling and busy, and delighted to see Miss Amy, but sitting on the ground by the side of the clothes basket, her head buried in her hands, and sobbing as if her heart would break. "What could be the matter? Why did she cry so?" asked Amy.

And Dame Clewer, unable to resist the kind interest shown by the affectionate child, told





ingrocks

her briefly the cause of her distress. "Thomas had enlisted!" How few words may convey a great sorrow! Thomas was gone for a soldier, and the poor mother flung herself at her length on the ground, and gasped and sobbed as though she would never speak again.

"Gone for a soldier!" exclaimed Amy. "Left you! Oh, he never can be so cruel, so wicked! He'll come back, dear nurse!" (for Amy always called Dame Clewer nurse, as her mother had been used to do). "He'll be sure to come back; Thomas is such a good son, with all his wildness. He'll come back—I know he will."

"He can't!" replied poor nurse, trying to rouse herself from her misery. "He can't come, how much soever he may wish it; they'll not let him. Nothing can get him off but money, and I have none to give," and again the mother's tears choked her words. "My poor boy must go!"

"Money!" said Amy; "I have half a crown that godmamma gave me, and two shillings and three sixpences; I'll ~~go~~ and fetch them in a moment."

"Blessings on your dear heart!" sobbed Dame Clewer, "your little money would be of no use. The soldier who came to tell me offered to get him off for five pounds; but where am I to get five pounds? All my goods and all my clothes would not raise near such a sum; and even if anybody was willing to lend money to a poor old creature like me, how should I ever be able to pay it? No! Thomas must go—go to the East Indies, as the soldier said, to be killed by the sword or to die of the fever! I shall never see his dear face again! Never!"

And turning resolutely from the pitying child, she bent over the clothes in the basket, trying to unfold them with her trembling hands and to hang them out to dry; but, unable in her agony to separate the wet linen, she burst into a passion of tears, and stood leaning against the clothes line, which quivered and vibrated at every sob, as if sensible of the poor mother's misery.

Amy, on her part, sat on the steps leading to the house, watching her in silent pity. "Oh, if mamma were alive!" thought the little girl, "or papa, or if I dared ask Aunt

Lloyd, or if I had the money of my own, or anything that would fetch the money."

Just as she was thinking this very thought, Floss, wondering to see his little mistress so still and sad, crept up to her, and put his paw on her lap and whined.

"Dear Floss!" said Amy, unconsciously, and then suddenly remembering what Lady Lumley had said to her, she took the dog up in her arms, and coloured like scarlet, from a mingled emotion of pleasure and pain, for Flossy had been her own mamma's dog, and Amy loved him dearly.

For full five minutes she sat hugging Flossy and kissing his sleek shining head, whilst the faithful creature licked her cheeks and her hands, and nestled up to her bosom, and strove all he could to prove his gratitude, and return her caresses. For full five minutes she sat without speaking; at last she went to Dame Clewer, and gave the dog into her arms.

"Lady Lumley offered me five guineas for Flossy this morning," said she; "take him, dear nurse, and get the money; but beg her to be kind to him," continued poor Amy, no longer able to restrain her tears; "beg her

to be very kind to my Floss!" And, with a heart too full even to listen to the thanks and blessings which the happy mother was showering upon her head, the little girl turned away.

But did Lady Lumley buy Flossy? And was Thomas Clewer discharged? Yes, Thomas was discharged, for Sir John Lumley spoke to his colonel; and he returned to his home and his fond mother, quite cured of his wildness and his fancy for being a soldier. But Lady Lumley did not buy Floss, because, as she said, however she might like him, she never could bear to deprive so good a girl as Amy of anything that gave her pleasure. She would not buy Floss, but she continued to take great notice both of him and his little mistress, had them often at the castle, always made Amy a Christmas present, and talks of taking her for her own maid when she grows up.

## THE RESIDUARY LEGATEE

Above half a century ago—for to such a date does my little story refer—Red Lion Square was accounted a genteel, if not a fashionable, place of residence, and numbered amongst its inhabitants some of the principal London attorneys—solicitor was not the phrase in those days—to whom its vicinity to the inns of court rendered that neighbourhood particularly convenient.

Amongst the most respectable of these respectable persons was Mr. Mordaunt, a widower with five children, whose mingled strength and kindness of character rendered him the very man to educate and bring out his motherless family, just as the union of acuteness and integrity, for which he was distinguished in his professional life, had placed him deservedly at the head of one of the most flourishing firms in the Metropolis.

He was not rich, for he had begun the world

with nothing but industry and talent, had married a lady in the same condition as himself, and had preferred giving his children the possession of an excellent education to the hoarding of money for their immediate portions.

But, in the prime of life, with an excellent income and still brighter prospects, he lived as became a man of liberal habits and elegant tastes, and generous, both from temper and principle, refused no indulgence to his family, except such as appeared to him inconsistent with their station, or with that wise and liberal economy which is as necessary, perhaps even more so, to the rich as to the poor.

The young people were all of high promise. The eldest, Frank, a youth of extraordinary ability, bringing up to the bar, was on the point of leaving Oxford, where he had distinguished himself greatly, and had recently been entered at the Temple.

William, the second son, was in his father's office; and of the three daughters, Catherine, the eldest, a girl of eighteen, was eminently pretty; Sarah, two years younger, and less handsome, had something of her brother

Frank's talent; and little Barbara, the pet and plaything of the whole house, was that charming creature, a lively and good-humoured spoilt child.

One evening, in the beginning of July, this amiable family were assembled in their pretty drawing-room, fresh hung with India paper, where gorgeous birds were perched amongst gorgeous flowers, and Chinese processions, gorgeous and immovable as the flowers or the birds, stuck amidst gay pagodas and gilded temples—a bright but unmeaning pageant. The furniture consisted of high-bottomed French chairs and settees covered with blue damask, at once handsome and uncomfortable, with window curtains to match, a cabinet, a mahogany bureau, of which the top formed a small bookcase with glass doors; a harpsichord—for pianos were not yet in use; two large looking-glasses between the windows, and marble tables with gilt legs underneath them; a Pembroke table in the middle of the room, and a large fire-screen, with a stupendous bunch of flowers in embroidery, the work of the fair Catherine, in one corner.

Mr. Mordaunt was writing a letter at one

table; his eldest daughter working, or, to use her brother's phrase, flourishing, an apron at another; the young men were lounging at the windows; and Bab (for the dignity of that aristocratic name, so often seen in the peerage, and so seldom elsewhere, was in this young lady's case sadly pretermitted, the very house-maid who dressed her calling her Miss Bab) was playing with her doll on the floor.

Sarah's employment was different from the rest. She was standing at the harpsichord, busied in arranging, in china vases, a quantity of flowers with which it was strewed, and which had just arrived from a small country house, which Mr. Mordaunt called his farm, on Enfield Chase. With great taste Sarah had put the honeysuckles, so pretty by themselves and which mix so ill with gayer flowers, in a large jar on the centre of the mantelpiece, flanking it with a smaller pot filled with white Provence roses—so elegant and delicate amongst their own green leaves—on one side, and another pot of that rose called the maiden's blush on the side opposite; whilst the rest of the old-fashioned bouquet, pinks, lilies, lark-spurs, sweet-williams, and sweet-peas, she

gathered together in a large china bowl, and placed on the harpsichord between a pile of music books and a guitar case.

"How I wish these flowers had arrived before poor Mrs. Sullivan went away!" exclaimed Sarah, after standing before them for some minutes to survey and admire her own handiwork. "She seemed so out of spirits, poor woman! and some of these beautiful roses would have comforted her and done her good; at least," added she, seeing her elder brother smile and shake his head, "I am sure they would always have cheered me, let me be as melancholy as I might; and she is as fond of flowers as I am, and was always used to them in her father's fine garden."

"Kindness must always do good under any form, my dear Sarah," observed her father, looking up from his letter; "but I fear that poor Mrs. Sullivan's sadness is too deeply seated to be touched by your pretty remedy, and that anything which reminds her of her father's house is more likely to increase than to remove it."

"Mr. Darrell, then, continues unforgiving?" enquired Frank, with much interest.

"Yes," replied Mr. Mordaunt, "and I fear will remain so. I am writing to him now in his daughter's behalf, but I have no hope of any good result. He sent for my partner yesterday to make his will, evidently to avoid my importunity in favour of these poor Sullivans. Her elopement was a most foolish act—a wrong, as well as foolish act; but ten years of penitence and suffering might have softened my old friend towards his only child, and one who, spoilt by his indulgence and her own position in society—a beauty and an heiress—can so ill support the poverty and neglect under which she now languishes."

"Was she beautiful?" asked Catherine: "I see no remains of former loveliness."

"She is much changed," answered Frank; "but even I can remember her a most splendid woman. She had the presence and air of a queen, or rather of a young lady's notion of a queen. Fancy a stately and magnificent creature, with high features; a dark, clear, colourless complexion; a proud, curling lip; large black eyes—sometimes soft and languishing, but which could light up with a fire as bright as the glow of a furnace; a broad,

smooth forehead; a dark brow, and a sweet smile, and you will have some idea of Sophia Darrell before her unfortunate marriage. Poverty and her father's displeasure have wrought this change, and perhaps her husband's death."

"Chiefly want of money," observed Mr. Mordaunt, sealing and directing his letter. "She had pretty well got over the loss of Captain Sullivan. Want of money is the pressing evil."

"I wish I were as rich as Mr. Darrell!" cried Sarah; and then she blushed and stopped, adding, in a hesitating voice, "What a pity it is that good wishes can do no real good!"

"Except to the wisher, Sarah," replied her father. "The slightest emotion of disinterested kindness that passes through the mind improves and refreshes that mind, producing generous thought and noble feeling, as the sun and rain foster your favourite flowers. Cherish kind wishes, my children, for a time may come when you may be enabled to put them in practice. In the meanwhile," added he, in a gayer tone, "tell me, if you were all very rich,

what you would wish for yourselves, ladies and gentlemen?"

"Oh, papa," exclaimed Sarah, "a great library!"

"And I," said Miss Bab, from the floor, "I'd have a great doll."

"I'd go to Italy," said Frank.

"I to Oxford," cried his brother.

"And I to Ranelagh," said Catherine, laughing. "In the meantime," added she, as the footman—it being now six o'clock, for they had dined at the then usual hour of three—brought in the tea service, followed by the silver kettle and lamp, "in the meantime we may as well go to tea, and afterwards take a walk in Gray's Inn Garden as we meant to do, for the evening is beautiful, and my new hat is just come home."

About two months after, the same party, with the exception of Mr. Mordaunt, were assembled at nearly the same hour in a very different scene. They were then passing the long vacation at the farm, and, it being Bab's birthday, had adjourned to the roothouse, a pretty rustic building at the end of the garden, to partake of fruit and cakes, and a syllabub from

the cow which the enchanted little girl had been permitted to compound herself under the direction and superintendence of the house-keeper.

It was a scene beautiful in itself and full of youthful enjoyment. The somewhat sombre roothouse, with its Gothic painted windows, its projecting thatch, supported by rough pillars clothed with ivy, clematis, passion-flowers, and the virgin-in-the-bower, looked out on a garden, gay with hollyhocks, balsams, China asters, African marigolds, the rich scarlet geranium, and the sweet marvel of Peru.

The evening sun gleamed brightly around, shining on the old farmhouse, whose casement windows peeped, through a clustering vine, on a small piece of water at the end of the garden and the green common and forest beyond, with an effect of light and shadow just, as Sarah observed, "like a real picture"; and the figures scattered about would have pleased a painter's eye almost as well as the landscape in which they were placed.

Catherine, radiant with innocent gaiety, blooming as Hebe, stood catching in a wicker basket the large bunches of grapes which her younger

brother, with one foot on a ladder, and one on the steep roof of the house, threw down to her and Frank, who was at once steadyng the ladder and directing the steps of the adventurous gatherer.

Little Bab, the heroine of the day, was marching in great state down a broad gravel walk leading from the house to the roothouse, preceding a procession consisting of John, the footman, with a tray of jingling spoons and glasses; the housekeeper, bearing the famous syllabub, her own syllabub; and the housemaid, well laden with fruit and cakes.

Sarah, faithful to her flowers, was collecting an autumn nosegay—cloves, jessamine, blossomed myrtle, mignonette, and the late musk rose—partly as an offering to Miss Barbara, partly for her father, whose return from town, whither he had been summoned on business, was anxiously expected by them all.

Just as the young people were collected together in the roothouse, Mr. Mordaunt arrived. He was in deep mourning, and although receiving with kindness Sarah's offering of flowers, and Bab's bustling presentation of a glass of syllabub, which the little lady of the day

insisted on filling herself, was evidently serious, preoccupied, almost agitated.

He sat down without speaking, throwing his hat upon the table, and pushing away Catherine's guitar, which had been brought thither purposely to amuse him. He had even forgotten that it was poor Bab's birthday, until reminded of it by the child herself, who clambered upon his knees, put her arms round his neck, and demanded that her dear papa should kiss her and wish her joy. He then kissed her tenderly, uttered a fervent blessing on her and on all his children, and relapsed into his former silence.

At length he said, "My sadness saddens you, my dear boys and girls, but I am just come from a very solemn scene, from Mr. Darrell's funeral."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Frank, with much emotion; "I did not even know that he was dead."

"Nor I till I reached London yesterday," returned Mr. Mordaunt.

"Poor Mrs. Sullivan!" cried Sarah; "did her father forgive her before he died?"

"He sent her his forgiveness on his death-bed—an unspeakable comfort—but still his

angry will remains unrevoked. She and her children are starving, whilst his immense fortune descends to one unconnected with him by blood, or any tie save that of an old friendship. After a few trifling bequests to friends and servants, I am left residuary legatee.

"The property is large, my children; larger, perhaps, than with your moderate views and limited expectations you can readily understand. You may be rich, even beyond the utmost grasp of your wishes, and Catherine may revel in innocent amusement, and Frank in tasteful travel; college with all its advantages is open to his brother; Sarah may have endless books, and Barbara countless dolls; luxury, splendour, gaiety, and ambition are before you —the trappings of grandeur or the delight of lettered ease.

"You may be rich, my children, beyond the dreams of avarice, or you may resign these riches to the natural heir, and return to peaceful competence and honourable exertion, reaping no other fruit from this unsought-for legacy than a spotless reputation and a clear conscience. Choose, and choose freely.



1261

WHOSE PRETTY LITTLE DOG IS THAT MY DEAR?

PIERCE



"My little Sarah has, I think, already chosen. When, some weeks ago, she wished to be as rich as Mr. Darrell, I read her countenance ill if the motive of that wish were not to enrich Mrs. Sullivan. Choose, my dear children, and choose freely!"

"Oh, my dear father, we have chosen! Could you think that we should hesitate? I answer for my brothers and sisters, as for myself. How could *your* children waver between wealth and honour?" And Frank, as he said this, threw himself into his father's arms, the other young people clinging round them, even little Bab exclaiming, "Oh, dear papa, the money must *be all* for Mrs. Sullivan!"

. . . . .

The relator of this true anecdote had the pleasure of hearing it from one of the actors in the scene, the Sarah of her little story, who is now in a green old age, the delight of her friends, and the admiration of her acquaintances.

Her readers will probably be as glad to hear as she was that the family, thus honourably self-deprived of enormous riches, has

been eminently happy and prosperous in all its branches—that the firm, distinguished by the virtues of its founder, still continues one of the foremost in London—and that a grandson of Mr. Mordaunt's, no less remarkable for talent and integrity than his grandfather, is at the present time a partner in the house.

## THE INCENDIARY

No one that had the misfortune to reside during the last winter in the disturbed districts of the South of England will ever forget the awful impression of that terrible time. The silly gatherings of the misguided peasantry amongst the wild hills, partly heath and partly woodland, of which so much of the northern part of Hampshire is composed—dropping in one by one, and two by two, in the gloom of evening, or the dim twilight of a November morning; or the open and noisy meetings of determined men at noontide in the streets and greens of our Berkshire villages, and even sometimes in the very churchyards, sallying forth in small but resolute numbers to collect money or destroy machinery, and compelling or persuading their fellow-labourers to join them at every farm they visited; or the sudden appearance and disappearance of those large bodies, who sometimes remained together to

the amount of several hundreds for many days, and sometimes dispersed, one scarcely knew how, in a few hours; their daylight marches on the highroad, regular and orderly as those of an army; or their midnight visits to lonely houses, lawless and terrific as the descent of pirates, or the incursions of banditti—all brought close to us a state of things which we never thought to have witnessed in peaceful and happy England.

In the sister island, indeed, we had read of such horrors, but now they were brought home to our very household hearths; we tasted of fear, the bitterest cup that an imaginative woman can taste, in all its agonizing varieties, and felt, by sad experience, the tremendous difference between that distant report of danger, with which we had so often fancied that we sympathized, and the actual presence of danger itself.

Such events are salutary, inasmuch as they show to the human heart its own desperate self-deceit. I could not but smile at the many pretty letters of condolence and fellow-feeling which I had received from writers who wrote far too well to feel anything, who most evi-

dently felt nothing; but the smile was a melancholy one—for I recollect how often, not intending to feign, or suspecting that I was feigning, I myself had written such.

Nor were the preparations for defence, however necessary, less shocking than the fears of attack. The hourly visits of bustling parish officers, bristling with importance (for our village, though in the centre of the insurgents, continued “faithful amidst the unfaithful”—and was, therefore, quite a rallying point for loyal men and true); the swearing in of whole regiments of petty constables; the stationary watchmen, who every hour, to prove their vigilance, sent in some poor wretch, beggar or matchseller, or rambling child, under the title of suspicious persons; the mounted patrol, whose deep “all’s well”, which ought to have been consolatory, was about the most alarming of all alarming sounds; the soldiers, transported from place to place in carts the better to catch the rogues, whose local knowledge gave them great advantage in a dispersal; the grave processions of magistrates and gentlemen on horseback, and, above all, the nightly collecting of arms and armed men within our own

dwelling, kept up a continual sense of nervous inquietude.

Fearful, however, as were the realities, the rumours were a hundredfold more alarming. Not an hour passed but, from some quarter or other, reports came pouring in of mobs gathering, mobs assembled, mobs marching upon us. Now the highroads were blockaded by the rioters, travellers murdered, soldiers defeated, and the magistrates, who had gone out to meet and harangue them, themselves surrounded and taken by the desperate multitude.

Now the artisans—the commons, so to say, of B.—had risen to join the peasantry, driving out the gentry and tradespeople, while they took possession of their houses and property, and only detaining the mayor and aldermen as hostages. Now that illustrious town held loyal, but was besieged. Now the mob had carried the place, and artisans, constables, tradespeople, soldiers, and magistrates, the mayor and corporation included, were murdered to a man, to say nothing of women and children; the marketplace running with blood, and the town hall filled with dead bodies.

This last rumour, which was much to the

taste of our villagers, actually prevailed for several hours; terrified maid-servants ran shrieking about the house, and every corner of the village street realized Shakspeare's picture of "a smith swallowing a tailor's news".

So passed the short winter's day. With the approach of night came fresh sorrows; the red glow of fires gleaming on the horizon, and mounting into the middle sky; the tolling of bells; and the rumbling sound of the engines clattering along from place to place, and often, too often, rendered useless by the cutting of the pipes after they had begun to play—which proved that among those who assembled, professedly to help, were to be found favourers of the concealed incendiaries.

Oh, the horror of those fires, breaking forth night after night, sudden, yet expected, always seeming nearer than they actually were, and always said to have been more mischievous to life and property than they actually had been! Mischievous enough they were, Heaven knows! A terrible and unholy abuse of the most beautiful and comfortable of the elements, a sinful destruction of the bounties of Providence, an

awful crime against God and man. Shocking it was to behold the peasantry of England becoming familiarized with this tremendous power of evil—this desperate, yet most cowardly sin.

The blow seemed to fall, too, just where it might least have been looked for—on the unoffending, the charitable, the kind; on those who were known only as the labourer's friends, to impoverish whom was to take succour, assistance, and protection from the poor.

One of the objects of attack in our own immediate neighbourhood was a widow lady between eighty and ninety; the best of the good, the kindest of the kind. Occurrences like this were in every way dreadful. They made us fear (and such fear is a revengeful passion, and comes near to hate) the larger half of our species. They weakened our faith in human nature.

The revulsion was, however, close at hand. A time came which changed the current of our feelings. The fires were quenched; the riots were put down; the chief of the rioters were taken. Examination and commitment were the order of the day; the crowded jails

groaned with their overload of wretched prisoners; soldiers were posted at every avenue to guard against possible escape; and every door was watched night and day by miserable women—the wives, mothers, or daughters of the culprits, praying for admission to their unfortunate relatives. The danger was fairly over, and pity had succeeded to fear.

Then, above all, came the special commission: the judges in threefold dignity; the array of counsel; the crowded court; the solemn trial; the awful sentence; all the more impressive from the merciful feeling which pervaded the government, the counsel, and the court.

My father, a very old magistrate, being chairman of the bench as well as one of the grand jury; and the then high sheriff, with whom it is every way an honour to claim acquaintance, being his intimate friend, I saw and knew more of the proceedings of this stirring time than usually falls to the lot of women, and took a deep interest in proceedings which had in them a thrilling excitement, as far beyond acted tragedy as truth is beyond fiction.

I shall never forget the hushed silence of the listeners, a dense mass of human bodies, the heads only visible, ranged tier over tier to the very ceiling of the lofty hall; the rare and striking importance which that silence and the awfulness of the occasion gave to the mere official forms of a court of justice, generally so hastily slurred over and slightly attended to; the unusual seriousness of the counsel; the watchful gravity of the judges; and, more than all, the appearance of the prisoners themselves, belonging mostly to the younger classes of the peasantry, such men as one is accustomed to see in the fields, on the road, or the cricket ground, with sunburnt faces, and a total absence of reflection or care, but who now, under the influence of a keen and bitter anxiety, had acquired not only the sallow pallor proper to a prison, but the look of suffering and of thought, the brows contracted and brought low over the eyes, the general sharpness of feature and elongation of countenance, which gave an expression of intellect, a certain momentary elevation, even to the commonest and most vacant of human faces.

Such is the power of an absorbing passion,

a great and engrossing grief. One man only amongst the large number whom I heard arraigned (for they were brought out by tens and by twenties) would, perhaps, under other circumstances, have been accounted handsome; yet a painter would at that moment have found studies in many.

I shall never forget, either, the impression made on my mind by one of the witnesses. Several men had been arraigned together for machine-breaking. All but one of them had employed counsel for their defence, and under their direction had called witnesses to character, the most respectable whom they could find—the clergy and overseers of their respective parishes, for example—masters with whom they had lived, neighbouring farmers or gentry, or even magistrates—all that they could muster to grace or credit their cause.

One poor man alone had retained no counsel, offered no defence, called no witness, though the evidence against him was by no means so strong as that against his fellow-prisoners, and it was clear that his was exactly the case in which testimony to character would be of much avail.

The defence had ended, and the judge was beginning to sum up, when suddenly a tall, gaunt, upright figure, with a calm, thoughtful brow, and a determined but most respectful bearing, appeared in the witnesses' box. He was dressed in a smockfrock, and was clean and respectable in appearance, but evidently poor. The judge interrupted himself in his charge to enquire the man's business, and, hearing that he was a voluntary witness for the undefended prisoner, proceeded to question him, when the following dialogue took place. The witness's replies, which seemed to me then, and still do so, very striking from their directness and manliness, were delivered with the same humble boldness of tone and manner that characterized the words.

Judge—"You are a witness for the prisoner, an unsummoned witness?"

"I am, my lord. I heard that he was to be tried to-day, and have walked twenty miles to speak the truth of him, as one poor man may do of another."

"What is your situation in life?"

"A labourer, my lord; nothing but a day-labourer."

"How long have you known the prisoner?"

"As long as I have known anything. We were playmates together, went to the same school, have lived in the same parish. I have known him all my life."

"And what character has he borne?"

"As good a character, my lord, as a man need work under."

It is pleasant to add that this poor man's humble testimony was read from the judge's notes, and mentioned in the judge's charge, with full as much respect, perhaps a little more, than the evidence of clergymen and magistrates for the rest of the accused; and that, chiefly from this direct and simple tribute to his character, the prisoner in question was acquitted.

To return, however, from my evil habit of digressing (if I may use an Irish phrase) before I begin, and making my introduction longer than my story, a simple sin to which, in many instances, and especially in this, I am fain to plead guilty—to come back to my title and my subject—I must inform my courteous readers that the case which attracted most attention and excited most interest in this part

of the country, was the conflagration of certain ricks, barns, and farm buildings in the occupation of Richard Mayne; and that, not so much from the value of the property consumed (though that value was considerable), as on account of the character and situation of the prisoner, whom, after a long examination, the magistrates found themselves compelled to commit for the offence.

I did not hear this trial, the affair having occurred in the neighbouring county; and do not, therefore, vouch for "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth", as one does when an ear-witness; but the general outline of the story will suffice for our purpose.

Richard Mayne was a wealthy yeoman of the old school, sturdy, boisterous, bold, and kind, always generous, and generally good-natured, but cross-grained and stubborn by fits, and sometimes purse-proud—after the fashion of men who have made money by their own industry and shrewdness.

He had married late in life, and above him in station, and had now been for two or three years a widower with one only daughter, a girl of nineteen, of whom he was almost as

fond as of his greyhound Mayfly, and for pretty much the same reason—that both were beautiful and gentle, and his own, and both admired and coveted by others—that Mayfly had won three cups, and that Lucy had refused four offers.

A sweet and graceful creature was Lucy Mayne. Her mother, a refined and cultivated woman, the daughter of a clergyman, had communicated, perhaps unconsciously, much of her own taste to her daughter. It is true, that most young ladies, even of her own station, would have looked with great contempt on Lucy's acquirements, who neither played nor drew, and was wholly, in the phrase of the day, unaccomplished; but then she read Shakspeare and Milton, and the poets and prose writers of the Jameses' and Charleses' times, with a relish of their beauty very uncommon in a damsel under twenty; and when her father boasted of his Lucy as the cleverest as well as the prettiest lass within ten miles, he was not so far wrong as many of his hearers were apt to think him.

After all, the person to whom Lucy's education owed most was a relation of her mother's,

a poor relation, who, being left a widow with two children almost totally destitute, was permitted by Richard Mayne to occupy one end of a small farmhouse, about a mile from the old residence which he himself inhabited, whilst he farmed the land belonging to both.

Nothing could exceed his kindness to the widow and her family; and Mrs. Owen, a delicate and broken-spirited woman, who had known better days, and was now left with a sickly daughter and a promising son dependent on the charity of relatives and friends, found in the free-handed and open-hearted farmer and his charming little girl her only comfort. He even restored to her the blessing of her son's society, who had hitherto earned his living by writing for an attorney in the neighbouring town, but whom her wealthy kinsman now brought home to her, and established as the present assistant and future successor of the master of a well-endowed grammar school in the parish, Farmer Mayne being one of the trustees, and all-powerful with the others joined in the trust, and the then schoolmaster in so wretched a state of health as almost to ensure a speedy vacancy.





HANNAH HAD GOTTEN A LOVER

PAGE 6

In most instances, such an exertion of an assumed rather than a legitimate authority, would have occasioned no small prejudice against the party protected; but Philip Owen was not to be made unpopular, even by the unpopularity of his patron. Gentle, amiable, true, and kind—kind both in word and deed—it was found absolutely impossible to dislike him.

He was clever, too, very clever, with a remarkable skill for teaching, as both parents and boys soon found to their mutual satisfaction; for the progress of one half-year of his instruction equalled that made in a twelve-month under the old *régime*. He must also, one should think, have been fond of teaching, for, after a hard day's fagging at Latin and English, and writing and accounts, and all the drudgery of a boys' school, he would make a circuit of a mile and a half home in order to give Lucy Mayne a lesson in French or Italian. For a certainty, Philip Owen must have had a strong natural turn for playing the schoolmaster, or he never would have gone so far out of his way just to read Fénelon and Alfieri with Lucy Mayne.

So for two happy years matters continued. At the end of that time, just as the old school-master, who declared that nothing but Philip's attention had kept him alive so long, was evidently on his deathbed, Farmer Mayne suddenly turned Mrs. Owen, her son, and her sick daughter out of the house, which, by his permission, they had hitherto occupied; and declared publicly that whilst he held an acre of land in the parish, Philip Owen should never be elected master of the grammar school —a threat which there was no doubt of his being able to carry into effect.

The young man, however, stood his ground; and sending off his mother and sister to an uncle in Wales, who had lately written kindly to them, hired a room at a cottage in the village, determined to try the event of an election, which was rendered inevitable by the increasing age of the present holder.

The cause of Farmer Mayne's dislike to one whom he had so warmly protected, and whose conduct, manners, and temper had procured him friends wherever he was known, nobody could assign with any certainty. Perhaps he had unwittingly trodden on Mayfly's foot, or

had opposed some prejudice of her master's, but his general carefulness not to hurt anything, or offend anybody, rendered either of these equally improbable; perhaps he had been found only too amiable by the farmer's other pet—those lessons in languages were dangerous things!—and when Lucy was seen at church with a pale face and red eyes, and when his landlord Squire Hawkins's blood hunter was seen every day at Farmer Mayne's door, it became currently reported and confidently believed that the cause of the quarrel was a love affair between the cousins, which the farmer was determined to break off, in order to bestow his daughter on the young lord of the manor.

Affairs had been in this state for about a fortnight, and the old schoolmaster was just dead, when a fire broke out in the rickyard of Farley Court, and Philip Owen was apprehended and committed as the incendiary. The astonishment of the neighbourhood was excessive; the rector and half the farmers of the place offered to become bail, but the offence was not bailable; and the only consolation left for the friends of the unhappy

young man was the knowledge that the trial would speedily come on, and their consciousness that an acquittal was certain.

As time wore on, however, their confidence diminished. The evidence against him was terribly strong. He had been observed lurking about the rickyard with a lantern, in which a light was burning, by a lad in the employ of Farmer Mayne, who had gone thither for hay to fodder his cattle about an hour before the fire broke out.

At eleven o'clock the haystack was on fire, and at ten Robert Doyle had mentioned to James White, another boy in Farmer Mayne's service, that he had seen Mr. Philip Owen behind the great rick. Farmer Mayne himself had met him at half-past ten (as he was returning from B. market) in the lane leading from the rickyard towards the village, and had observed him throw something he held in his hand into the ditch.

Humphry Harris, a constable employed to seek for evidence, had found the next morning a lantern answering to that described by Robert Doyle, in the part of the ditch indicated by Farmer Mayne, which Thomas Brown, the

village shopkeeper, in whose house Owen slept, identified as having lent to his lodger in the early part of the evening. A silver pencil, given to Owen by the mother of one of his pupils, and bearing his full name on the seal at the end, was found close to where the fire was discovered; and, to crown all, the curate of the village, with whom the young man's talents and character had rendered him a deserved favourite, had unwillingly deposed that he had said "it might be in his power to take a great revenge on Farmer Mayne", or words to that effect; whilst a letter was produced from the accused to the farmer himself intimating that one day he would be sorry for the oppression which he had exercised towards him and his.

These two last facts were much relied upon as showing malice, and implying a purpose of revenge from the accused towards the prosecutor; yet there were many who thought that the previous circumstances might well account for them without reference to the present occurrence, and that the conflagration of the ricks and farm buildings might, under the spirit of the time (for fires were raging

every night in the surrounding villages), be merely a remarkable coincidence.

The young man himself simply denied the fact of setting fire to any part of the property or premises; enquired earnestly whether any lives had been lost, and still more earnestly after the health of Miss Lucy; and on finding that she had been confined to her bed by fever and delirium, occasioned, as was supposed, by the fright, ever since that unhappy occurrence, relapsed into a gloomy silence, and seemed to feel no concern or interest in the issue of the trial.

His friends, nevertheless, took kind and zealous measures for his defence, engaged counsel, sifted testimony, and used every possible means, in the assurance of his innocence, to trace out the true incendiary. Nothing, however, could be discovered to weaken the strong chain of circumstantial evidence, or to impeach the credit of the witnesses, who, with the exception of the farmer himself, seemed all friendly to the accused, and most distressed at being obliged to bear testimony against him. On the eve of the trial the most zealous of his friends could find

no ground of hope except in the chances of the day; Lucy, for whom alone the prisoner asked, being still confined by severe illness.

The judges arrived—the whole terrible array of the special commission; the introductory ceremonies were gone through; the cause was called on, and the case proceeded with little or no deviation from the evidence already cited.

When called upon for his defence, the prisoner again asked if Lucy Mayne were in court; and hearing that she was ill in her father's house, declined entering into any defence whatsoever. Witnesses to character, however, pressed forward—his old master, the attorney, the rector and curate of the parish, half the farmers of the village, everybody, in short, who ever had an opportunity of knowing him, even his reputed rival, Mr. Hawkins, who, speaking, he said, on the authority of one who knew him well, professed himself confident that he could not be guilty of a bad action—a piece of testimony that seemed to strike and affect the prisoner more than anything that had passed; evidence to character crowded into court, but all was of no avail.

against the strong chain of facts; and the judge was preparing to sum up, and the jury looking as if they had already condemned, when suddenly a piercing shriek was heard in the hall, and pale, tottering, dishevelled, Lucy Mayne rushed into her father's arms, and cried out with a shrill, despairing voice that "she was the only guilty one; that she had set fire to the rick; and that if they killed Philip Owen for her crime, they would be guilty of murder".

The general consternation may be imagined, especially that of the farmer, who had left his daughter almost insensible with illness, and still thought her light-headed. Medical assistance, however, was immediately summoned, and it then appeared that what she said was most true; that the lovers, for such they were, had been accustomed to place letters in one corner of that unlucky hayrick; that having seen from her chamber window Philip Owen leaving the yard, she had flown with a taper in her hand to secure the expected letter, and, alarmed at her father's voice, had run away so hastily, that she had, as she now remembered, left the lighted taper amidst the hay; that then

the fire came, and all was a blank to her until, recovering that morning from the stupor succeeding to delirium, she had heard that Philip Owen was to be tried for his life from the effect of her carelessness, and had flown to save him she knew not how!

The sequel may be guessed: Philip was, of course, acquitted: everybody, even the very judge, pleaded for the lovers; the young landlord and generous rival added his good word; and the schoolmaster of Farley and his pretty wife are at this moment one of the best and happiest couples in his Majesty's dominions.

## A MOONLIGHT ADVENTURE

I am no lover of moonlight, unpoetical as the avowal is; such is the fact, and I confess it frankly. I hate darkness and shadow and a pallid, fitful light, as much as I like distinctness, and brightness, and colour, and, therefore, love the sun. Give me the day's beauty, and who will may take the night's. I leave the lady moon to those Endymions the poets. Nay, so far do I carry my distaste that I greatly prefer that half-light, sitting indoors over the red glowing embers of a wood fire (the place of all others for a comfortable chat), to shivering in marble colonnades or beautiful arbours under the fullest moon that ever shone. There is something in that cold, pale, trembling ray that is sure to check conversation.

Even those persons who are so far from joining in my opinion, that they would swear by their honour that, compared to the moon-

beams, the blessed sunshine is naught, are yet unconsciously chilled by their influence, and after exclaiming how beautiful! have little else to say.

The nightingale, to be sure, I must admit the nightingale; but then, in spite of Shakespeare's mistake on the subject, his matchless song is heard in the general pause of noon (when so many of the common birds are hushed) even more finely than in the silence of midnight, and never, I think, comes on the ear so sweetly as when mingled in some leafy solitude with the tender cooing of the wood pigeon.

I am no lover of moonlight. Most of my adventures in that way have been of a disastrous sort, whether by land or by water. One fine summer evening, for instance, returning in the captain's boat, gallantly manned by the officers of the ship, from a frigate where we had dined, to the Isle of Wight, where we were residing, the boat was unluckily stranded off St. Helens, and we were obliged to wait five dismal hours until the tide was so good as to come and take us off, the captain's lady, a peevish, shrewish personage, taking occasion

to fret, and fume, and scold the whole time, ringing the changes on all the evils that were likely to befall us, from catching cold to being drowned, until she worked herself up into a fit of crying, and was effectually quieted by the first lieutenant throwing a hatful of sea-water in her face. I never shall forget those five hours.

Then, again, during the very next summer, being at Southampton, and making an excursion as far as Ryde in a friend's yacht, we had the calamity on our passage back to be becalmed for nearly the same period, just opposite Netley Abbey, and to have on board two musical young ladies, who obligingly offered to beguile the time by the exercise of their accomplishment, and increased our misfortune by every variety of scream and squall, of which that formidable personage, a singing young lady, is capable.

I remember at the time comparing the inflictions, and thinking that the scolding, crying, and sobbing of the stranded boat (to say nothing of the satisfactory conclusion of the sousing) were greatly preferable to the duets of the yacht. Besides which, nobody flung

literal cold water on the fair singers, though, metaphorically speaking, it was pretty freely done.

It must be admitted, that the winds and the waves were the chief aggressors in these grievances; but there shone the moon bright and cold, laughing, as it seemed, at our distress and increasing our sufferings. If it had been dark we might have gone to sleep. But in many a disastrous chance she herself, with her treacherous fickle light, has been the prime agent.

Were we not run away with down the steepest hill in the county, because the dear cream-colour caught a glimpse of the moon shimmering and shivering in the deep pool by Brackham Common? And did not the same lamented steed carry us into the middle of a herd of deer in Talbot Park, because he took fright at the black shadow of an old oak that lay across the road like something real? And were we not fairly upset into a gravel pit on Heartley Heath, one snowy Twelfth Night, owing again to those bright, deceitful beams which made the false track seem like the true?

Have we not missed our road through thee,

false moon, oftener than tongue can tell? Were we not near driving into the Long Water at Eversley, because we took a pollard for a finger-post, and a holly bush for a milestone? Dost thou not make lane look like lane, and cottage like cottage, and wood like wood? And art thou not the only true *ignis fatuus*? Never am I taken in by the treacherous postscript to a country concert bill, "N.B. There will be a moon". Give me an honest darkness. Then one feels one's way, and finds it.

As, however, there is no rule without its exception, so I must admit that certain pleasant passages of my life have been connected with her Cynthian majesty, one of which is the subject of the present short story.

Some years ago I was on a visit to a distant relation of my mother's, a naval officer, at his beautiful seat in the New Forest. The good admiral, for such was his professional rank, a most hearty and jovial person, had no greater delight than that of assembling "troops of friends" at his hospitable mansion, and his house was, as usual, full of agreeable and well-chosen guests.

By far the most striking of his inmates was his orphan ward, Jane Gordon, a rich heiress of high birth, and splendid connections, who, although she had been of age for some months, and in full possession of her large estates in the north of England, still continued to reside with her kind guardian, to whom she looked up with the tender love of a grateful child towards an indulgent parent.

The dear old admiral was, as it seemed to me, the only man whom Jane Gordon was ever likely to regard with either love or reverence. Of a noble and commanding beauty, and a most stately and dignified deportment, she had, it was true, a general and queen-like courtesy and condescension towards all who approached her, but so mingled with a gentle reserve, and a highbred coldness of manner, that her very polish served to repel familiarity, and to keep the boldest suitors at a distance.

Amongst her female friends, however (and I was fortunate enough to be included in the number), she sometimes relaxed sufficiently to show that her mind was as high-toned and majestic as her person. I have seldom met with anyone who had a wider reach of thought,

a purer taste, a warmer heart, or a kinder temper. Her common demeanour was abundantly chilling, but her moments of confidence were enchanting. She resembled those northern springs, where, the moment that the snow melts away, leaves and flowers start up to succeed them.

Of these glimpses of sunshine, however, no gentleman, certainly no young gentleman, was ever permitted to share. Proposal after proposal had been rejected, and her good guardian, who, much as he valued her society, ardently wished to see her married, declared to me one day that he had made up his mind never again to advocate the cause of any of her lovers. "I verily believe," added he, "that the more the girl is courted, the more she sets herself against matrimony. It's the only thing in which she's perverse."

"But the moment I mention a young fellow to her as likely to make a good husband, from that instant she takes a hatred to him; so that for the future I shall let her have her own way. There's your favourite now, Charles Elliott, who has been staying here these two months; it's quite clear that he's dying for her; and



THE LOVE LETTER



what a fine, noble fellow he is! How full of knowledge, and talent, and goodness! What a son, and brother, and friend, he has been all his life! and what a happy woman his wife would be!

"Yet she takes no more notice of Charles Elliott than of my old crutch! He asked me yesterday to second his proposals; but I told him frankly that he had my best wishes, but that I was tired of recommending suitors, and should take a special care not to mention his name. I' faith, last time I spoke to her on the subject (it was about Sir Thomas Hanley, some three months ago) she implored me to spare her such discourses, and look upon her as devoted to a single life. Elliott would have as fair a chance of tempting a nun from her cloister as of winning Jane Gordon." And with an air of affectionate vexation, the worthy veteran walked away.

It was on the evening succeeding this conversation that Jane Gordon, who had excused herself, on the score of indisposition, from accompanying the admiral and most of his visitors to dine at the house of a neighbouring nobleman, having besought me to remain and

keep her company, beguiled me into taking a moonlight walk into the forest.

We were the only persons left at home, for Mr. Elliott had at breakfast time announced his intention of riding out for the day to visit a harum-scarum friend of his, who was also staying in the neighbourhood; so that Miss Gordon, who had not made her excuses until half an hour before the admiral and his party set off for their dinner engagement, felt herself perfectly secure from intrusion and interruption in her ramble.

She had been all day silent and languid, far less stately than usual, and somewhat less calm, but more charming, softer, sweeter, tenderer, more feminine, than I had ever seen her even in her happiest moments. She seemed to me less ill than agitated, and I could not help saying, "Has anything vexed you, Jane? Can I be of any use to you?" And she hesitated and sighed out "No", whilst her countenance and manner said most plainly, Yes.

She was not, however, a person to be questioned, even if I had been disposed to force a reluctant confidence; and taking for granted

that the worthy old admiral (a professed match-maker) had, in spite of his professions, been worrying her on the score of Charles Elliott, or some other of her lovers, and that her embarrassment and low spirits proceeded from that cause, I followed the bent of her humour, and walked with her silently through the grounds into the forest.

The day had been oppressively warm, one of the rare hot days of an English summer, and was succeeded by a fresh and fragrant dewiness, which fell like balm upon the spirits. We wandered on, through brake and brier, threading the beautiful woodland paths, which lay in delicious repose in the bright moonlight, until at last she left the open tracks, and edged herself by ways to which she, as an inhabitant, was familiar, through the thick entanglement of underwood, until we reached a very small opening, quite walled in by hawthorn and holly bushes, and shaded by a noble beech, the roots of which formed, she said, her favourite seat.

There we sat down, and were falling gradually into a subdued tone of conversation, well suited to the scene and the hour, when all on

a sudden we heard the rapid steps and louder talking of men on the other side of the thicket, and immediately recognized the deep, mellow tones of Mr. Elliott, and the gay, blithe voice of his light-hearted companion, Captain Morland.

I was about to propose to join them, or, at least, to call to them to join us in our snug and, whilst we chose to make it so, undiscoverable retreat, when the strong and agitated compression of Miss Gordon's hand on my arm, whilst she laid the forefinger of her other hand on her lip, restrained me, and kept me an undesigned and unwilling listener to the following conversation, during which she contrived, by the most supplicating gestures, and by the most imploring pressure of my hand, to keep me as entirely and almost breathlessly silent as herself. I shall put down the dialogue just as we heard it through the leafy wall that alone parted us from the speakers, of whom Captain Morland was for some minutes incomparably the most talkative.

*Mor.* What a night, and what scenery! Was ever vapour so soft, so transparent, and so silvery as those small clouds that flit about the

moon? And the edges of light which surround the larger and darker masses, how bright and how beautiful are they! Did you ever see a lovelier sky?

*Ell.* Very lovely.

*Mor.* Then the effect of the moonbeams on this forest glade! How they sleep on that broad oak and dance in the tiny rivulet that wells from amidst the convolved and snaky roots, and goes winding and gurgling along the turf like a thing of life! And how the shining bark of the weeping birch stands out like a stem of silver, whilst the delicate branches, as they flutter in the night breeze, cast a tremulous and glancing shadow on the ground beneath! Is it not beautiful?

*Ell.* Eh? Yes; I believe so.

*Mor.* You believe so! And see how the holly leaves glitter above the tall fern which waves round us in such wild profusion—a lower forest! Is it not enchanting? And that deep, shadowy perspective, the intricacy, the involution, the mystery, which makes so much of the charm and the character of forest scenery. You don't enjoy it, Elliott! You, whom I have heard declaim for an hour together on a pol-

lard by the side of a pond, or an elm tree over-hanging a rustic bridge, or any such common-place picturesqueness; and here's a piece of fairyland that sets even such a rattlepate as I am exclaiming, and when one asks you if it be beautiful you say, I believe so! Only look at that cluster of glowworms.' Elliott, what can you be thinking of? I know that you are in love. But your true lover is ever a lover of nature; basks in the moonshine, and revels in the forest. It is his proper atmosphere. What can you be thinking of?

*Ell.* Simply, my dear Morland, that however delightful this place may be, it would be still more delightful if one of the fairies you talk of would have the goodness to guide us home again. For in my humble opinion we are lost.

*Mor.* Never fear.

"I know each glade, and every alley green,  
Dingle and bosky dell—"

By Jove, Elliott, you are right. I thought we had come back to the great oak from which the avenue branches, which leads us straight to Kinley Lodge. It's just such a tree. But

there is no spring welling out from the roots of the Kinley oak.

*Ell.* Neither is there any sign of an avenue here. Nor, indeed, as far as I can see, of any path whatsoever. We edged ourselves, if you remember, through one of these thickets. I think that to the left.

*Mor.* No, this to the right. I think to the right. Never mind. We are lost. Take the matter quietly, man, instead of wandering about in that manner, frightening the birds from their nests by beating the bushes and treading upon the poor, pretty glowworms, and putting out their lamps. Be peaceable. I shall have the worst of the adventure, inasmuch as I shall certainly get disinherited by my good aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Morland, for keeping bad hours whilst an inmate of her mansion, or rather for staying out all night (for we shall hardly get back before morning) in, as she will truly assert, bad company, for worse company than you at present, I think, can hardly be found. If the fair Jane Gordon were to see you in this mood!

*Ell.* Are you sure, Morland, that you have lost your way?

*Mor.* Certain. But what need you mind?

You have no maiden aunt to look after your false steps—you are a mere guest of the good admiral's—nobody to take care of you, nobody to lecture you, nobody to rave if you sleep out twenty nights; whilst I—

*Ell.* And you really think that we shan't get home before morning?

*Mor.* Morning! I rather apprehend that we shall never get home at all. I don't imagine that we shall find our way out; and I doubt, even if anyone thinks it worth while to look after us, whether he will find his way in, though, I take it, the forest is the last wilderness in which we shall be sought for. Mrs. Elizabeth is far more likely to have us cried in the next town, or to advertise us in the London papers under the head "Missing", with our names and marks, like two stray pointers.

*Ell.* Do, pray, be serious.

*Mor.* Certainly. It is a most grave subject. Twenty years hence, perhaps, we may turn up in the shape of the remains of two unfortunate gentlemen, who—

*Ell.* Hark! Is that a clock?

*Mor.* It's an owl, the clock of the forest.

*Ell.* Morland, I beseech you, leave jesting. If you could but imagine how important it is to me to reach Kinley by a certain time. Can you guess at the hour?

*Mor.* My repeater will tell us. (*Strikes his watch*)—Half-past ten.

*Ell.* Gracious Heaven! my prospects are ruined for ever! I am a wretch for life, the most miserable of wretches; he who might have been the happiest.

*Mor.* That tone is too genuine and too passionate to be trifled with. But how, my dear Elliott, can this little difficulty, which must end with the night, affect your happiness?

*Ell.* You know Jane Gordon?

*Mor.* Yes, yes, and your passion for her. All the world knows that, the proud beauty herself included. But she is so nice, and so coy, and so high, and so cold. What of Jane Gordon?

*Ell.* We are staying, you know, in the same house, and this morning I ventured, for the first time, to put my love for her into words.

*Mor.* Aye? and she listened?

*Ell.* Yes; she, the coy, the haughty Jane Gordon, listened and blushed, and stood awhile

in abashed silence, then turned slowly away; and when I seized her hand and pressed for an answer, faltered that she was going out with her guardian, but should be back by eleven, and then she broke from me. And not to meet her; she, the dear, the charming, the beautiful Jane Gordon, the admired of all eyes, the coveted of all tongues, the beloved of all hearts—she to have made such a concession! And if you had but heard the tone, if you had but seen the blush, if you could imagine to yourself how divinely her unusual softness became the coy beauty. And to fail her now!

*Mor.* You shall *not* fail her. I *will* find the way. How in the name of Heaven came you to be wandering in the forest on such a night?

*Ell.* Why, I went to spend the day with you to beguile the hours. And you yourself proposed that we should walk back to Kinley, and promised to be my guide.

*Mor.* But to trust such a guide as I was likely to prove. And on such an occasion. Never mind, though, my good fellow. I *will* find the way. And, depend on it, since Jane Gordon likes you well enough to have made

this half appointment, that you'll be the happy man whether you keep it or not. But I'll find the way. I'll be sure to find the way. We must set about it now in good earnest. To the right! I am sure to the right.

At this point the voices ceased, and the hasty footsteps which had at first mingled with the sound of crashing branches as Captain Morland, followed by his friend, forced his way through a thicket, luckily in an opposite direction from that in which we lay concealed, gradually receded, and at last totally ceased. We still remained in motionless silence. Jane, whose situation reminded me a little of that of Beatrice in the arbour, trembling and breathless, delighted yet ashamed; and I revolving with some amusement the fixed resolves of one-and-twenty, and the good admiral's knowledge of women. At last, when quite sure that the gentlemen were fairly out of hearing, and could not by possibility repay us in our own coin by listening to our discourse, she could restrain her emotion no longer, but fell on my neck in a passion of tears, sobbing out, "My friend, my own dear friend."

"Well, dearest?"

"What can you think of me?"

"I think you a wise woman. You could not have made a better choice."

"But my guardian?"

"He'll be enchanted. He told me only this very morning that he believed you'd live and die in single blessedness. A Protestant nun I think he called you."

"Oh! what will he think of me?"

"He'll be delighted, I tell you. Sailors are not, to be sure, remarkable for their knowledge of female character; but do you think he never heard before of a woman's changing her mind?"

"And Charles Elliott himself?"

"Nay, you heard what he said on the subject; and if you have a mind to hear what he has to say further, I advise you to make haste home, for they'll certainly be back before us. Come, dearest!"

"Oh! I never can see him this evening."

"But at all events we must get home. Did ever mortal creep so slowly? Walk faster, love!"

"You'll keep my counsel, then? You promise to keep my counsel?"

"Aye, dearest, as long as it shall be neces-

sary." And she pressed my hand, and we walked home in silence. And I have more than kept my word. For though the parties have been married these half-dozen years, I defy Mrs. Charles Elliott to say that I ever breathed a syllable of our moonlight adventure to man or woman till now, that I whisper it as a profound secret to that most safe and discreet confidant, my singular good friend the public